



SAMARTH RAMDAS

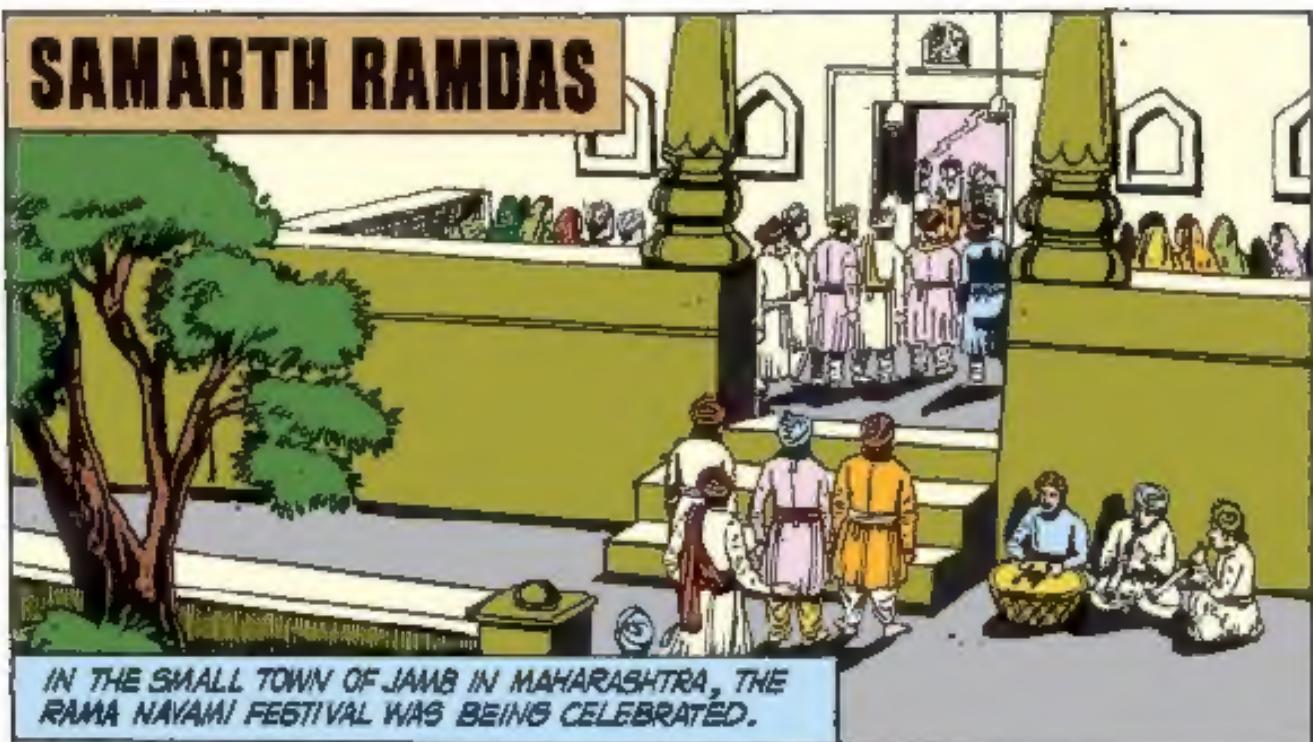
SHIVAJI'S SPIRITUAL GUIDE

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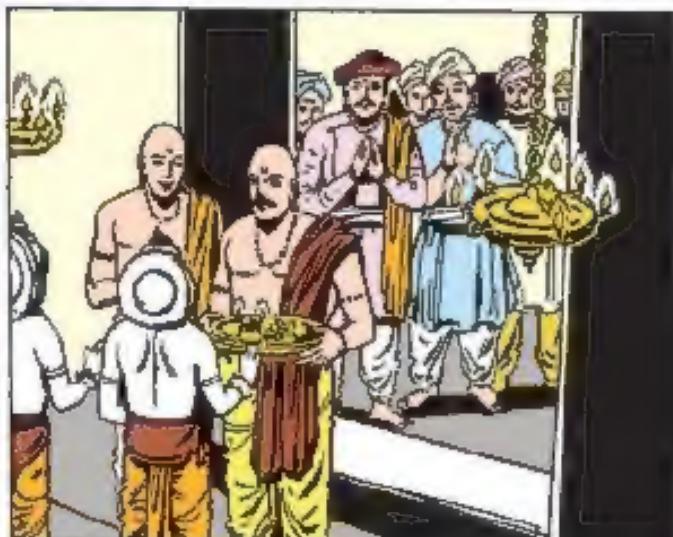


SAMARTH RAMDAS



IN THE SMALL TOWN OF JAMB IN MAHARASHTRA, THE RAMA NAVAMI FESTIVAL WAS BEING CELEBRATED.

THIS IS THE AUSPICIOUS MOMENT OF LORD RAMA'S BIRTH. LET THE MUSIC RISE TO A CRESCEENDO!



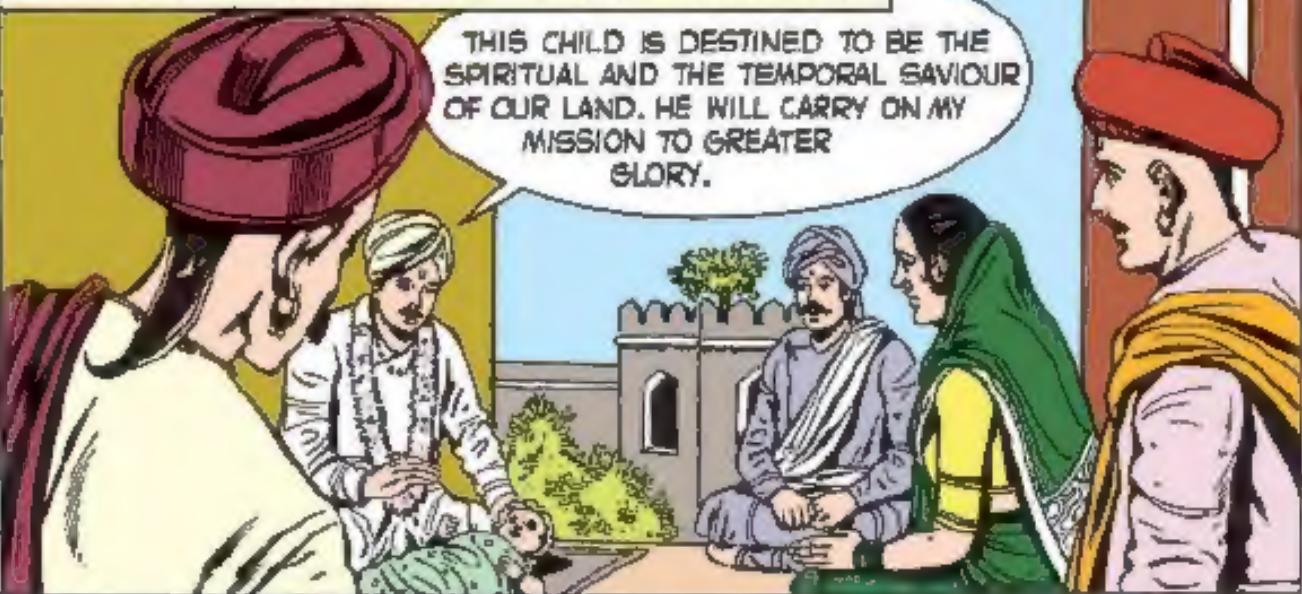
BURYAJI, BURYAJI!
YOUR WIFE HAS JUST
GIVEN BIRTH TO A
BABY BOY.

MY CHILD, BORN AT
THE SAME HOUR AS
LORD RAMA! THIS IS
A DIVINE FAVOUR.



WHEN SURYAJIPANT AND RANUBAI TOOK THEIR CHILD TO PAITHAN AND PLACED HIM AT THE FEET OF EKANATH, THE GREAT SAINT—

THIS CHILD IS DESTINED TO BE THE SPIRITUAL AND THE TEMPORAL SAVIOUR OF OUR LAND. HE WILL CARRY ON MY MISSION TO GREATER GLORY.



THE CHILD, WHO WAS NAMED NARAYAN, GREW UP TO BE A BRIGHT BOY.

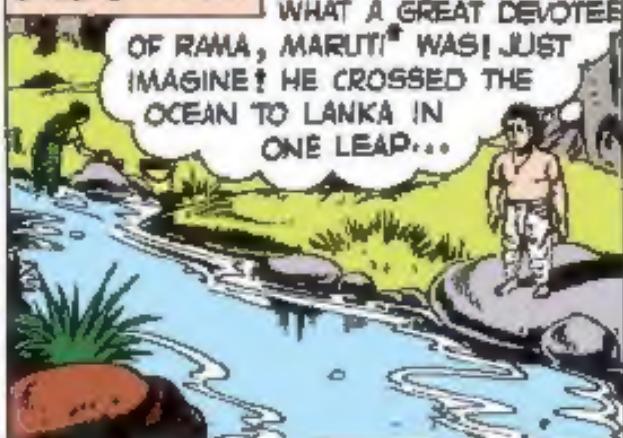
MOTHER,
I SHARE MY
BIRTHDAY WITH
LORD RAMA,
DON'T I?

YOU DO,
MY CHILD. YOU
MUST ALSO
STRIVE TO BE
LIKE HIM—
NOBLE AND
GOOD.



BUT IT WAS THE EXPLOITS OF HANUMAN THAT INITIALLY CAUGHT THE ENERGETIC CHILD'S FANCY.

WHAT A GREAT DEVOTEE
OF RAMA, MARUTI* WAS! JUST
IMAGINE! HE CROSSED THE
OCEAN TO LANKA IN
ONE LEAP...



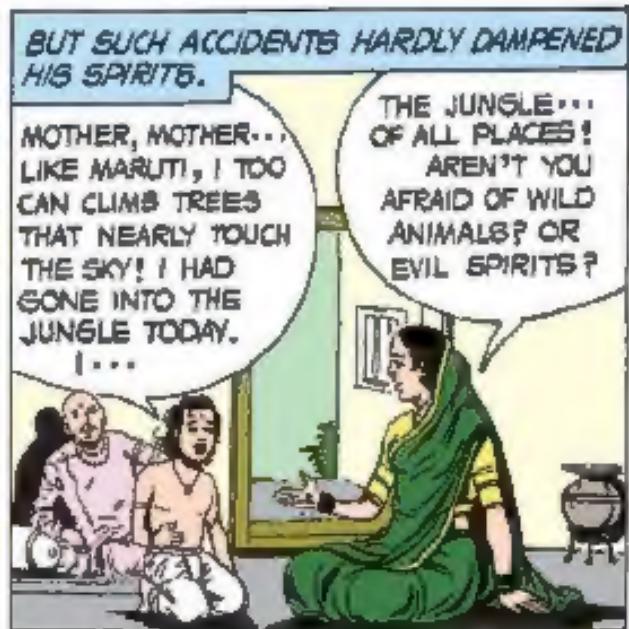
...LIKE
THIS!



NARAYAN...



* ANOTHER NAME FOR HANUMAN



WHEN NARAYAN WAS FIVE YEARS OLD, SURYAJI PANT DIED. THEREAFTER NARAYAN'S ELDER BROTHER, SANGADHAR, TOOK CARE OF THE FAMILY. SANGADHAR WAS THE HEAD OF A RELIGIOUS SCHOOL.

MOTHER, WHY DO SO MANY PEOPLE COME TO GANSABA DADA?

HE IS A TEACHER AND NOVICES COME TO HIM TO LEARN ABOUT GOD.

HE TAKES THEM INTO THAT ROOM AND CLOSES THE DOOR. WHAT DOES HE DO THERE?

HE TEACHES THEM THE SACRED LORE AND MAKES THEM DEVOTEES OF GOD. IT'S CALLED INITIATION.

MOTHER, I WANT TO BE INITIATED.

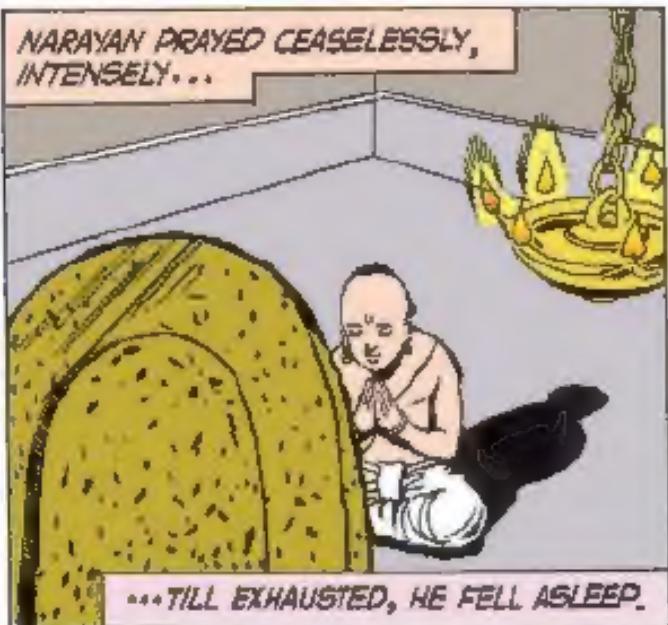
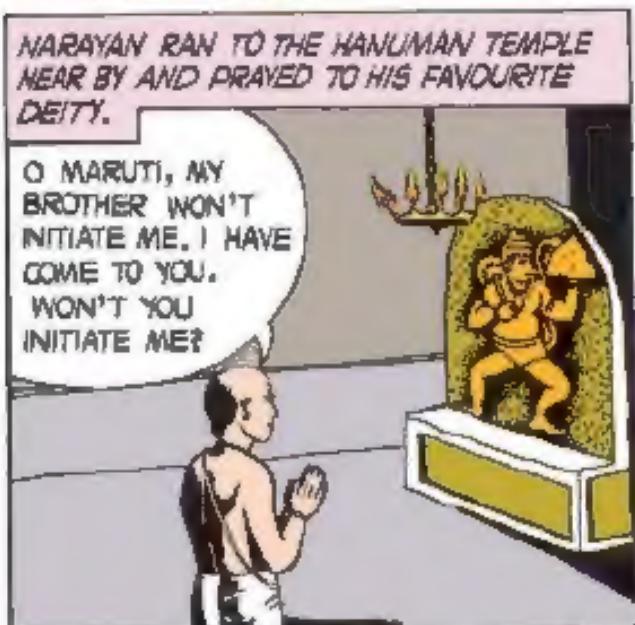
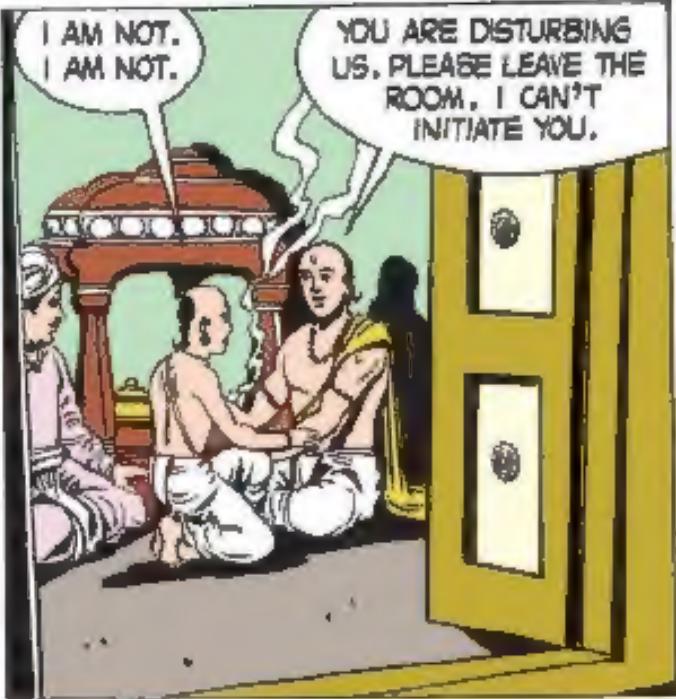
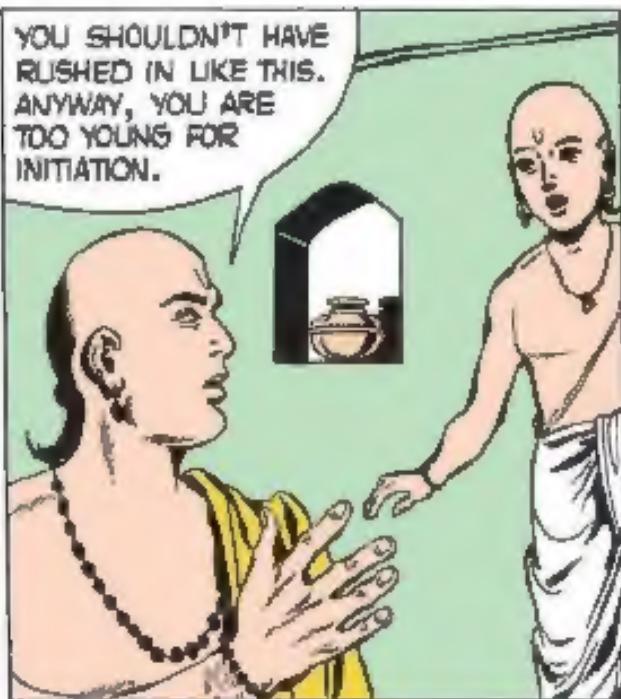
INITIATED? YOU? WHY YOU ARE JUST A BABY!

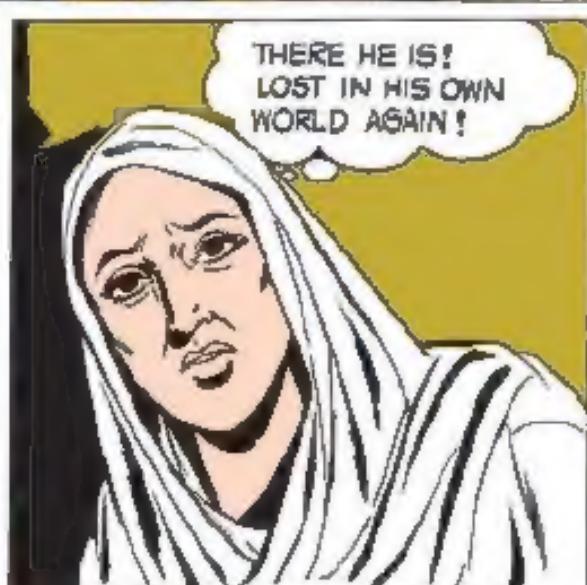
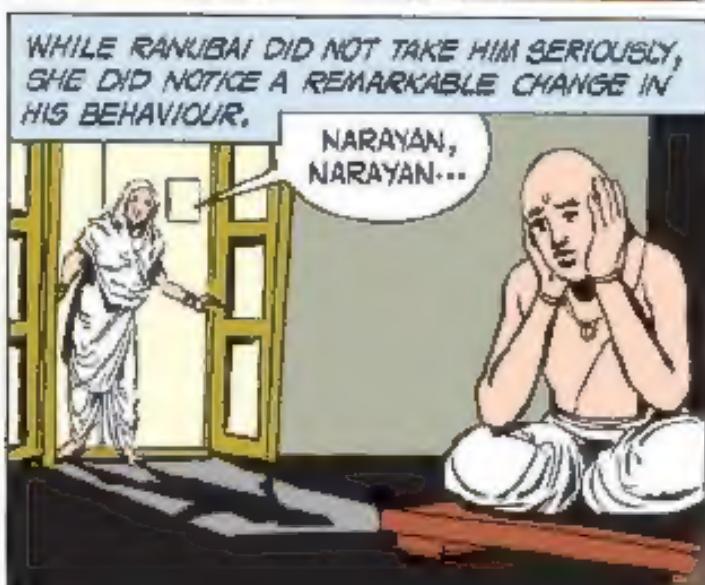
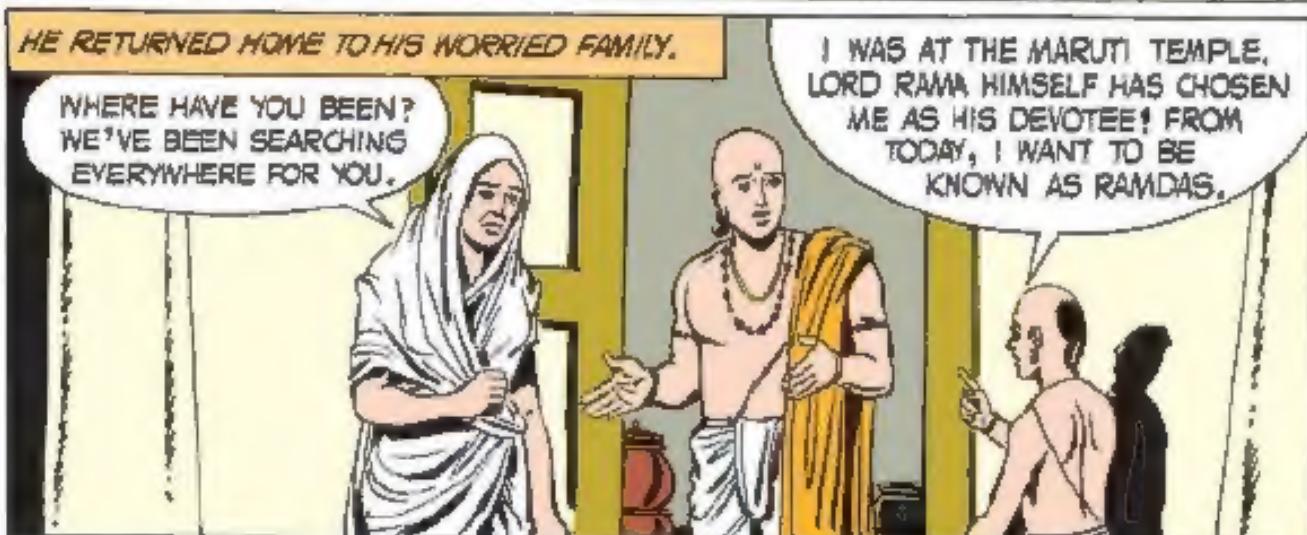
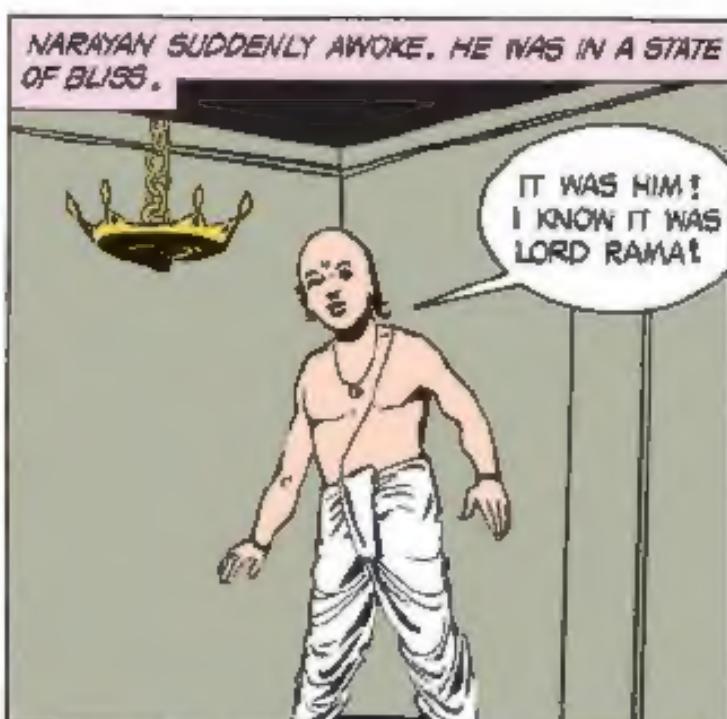
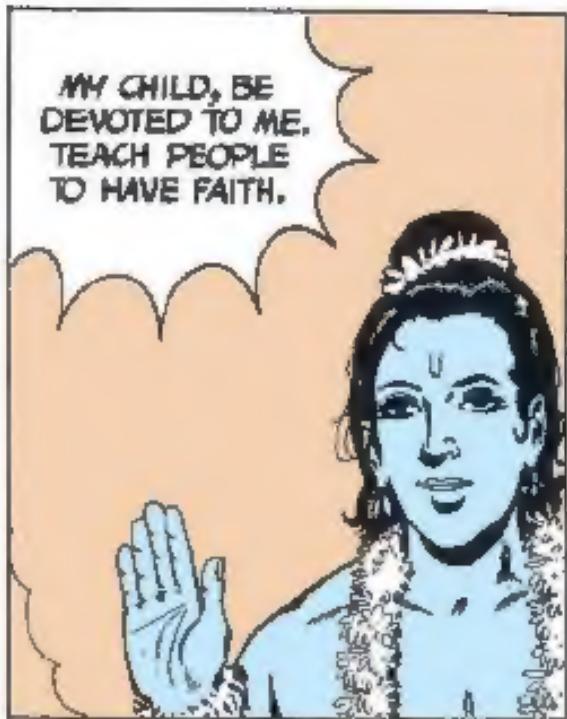
I AM NOT A BABY! I AM EIGHT YEARS OLD! I WILL BE INITIATED.

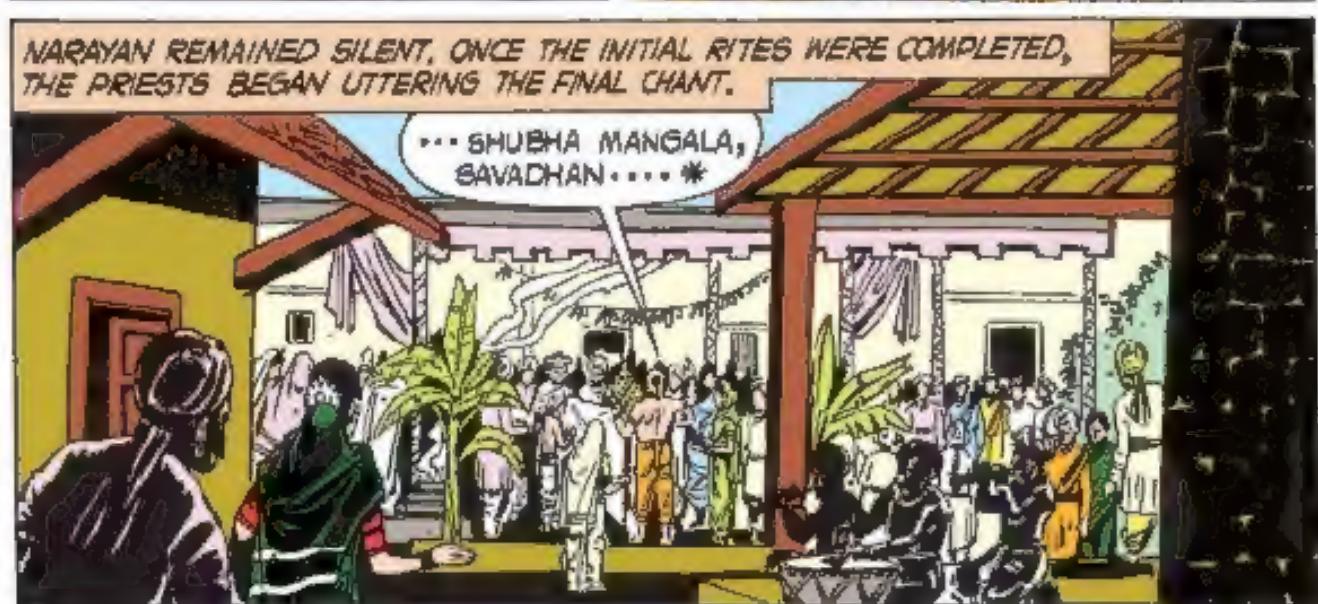
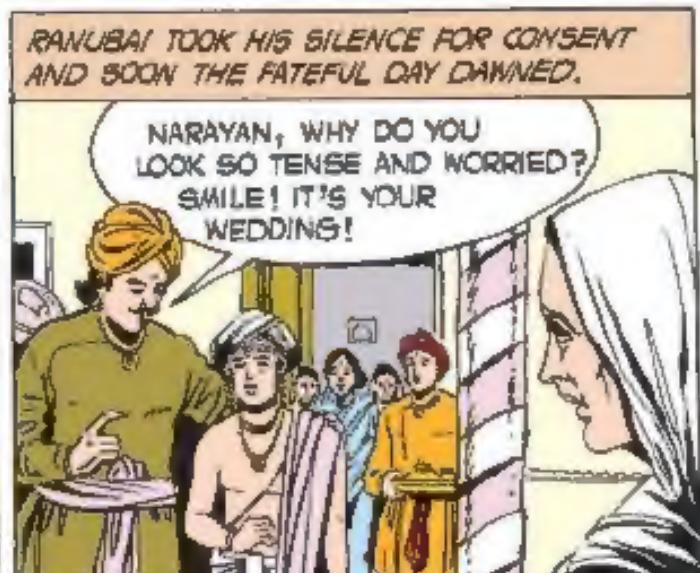
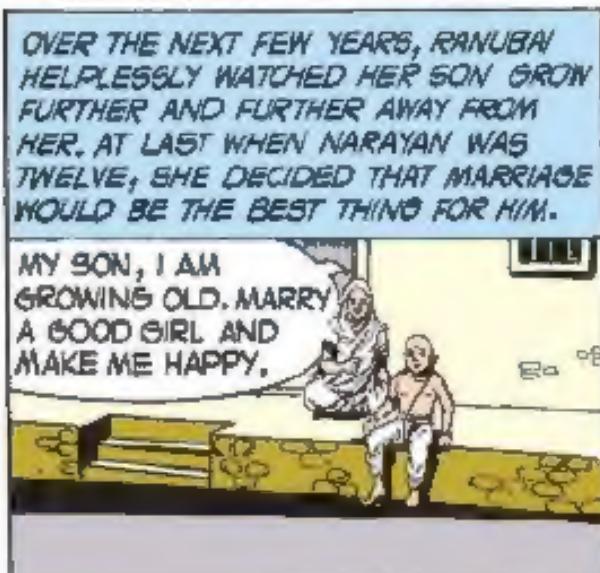
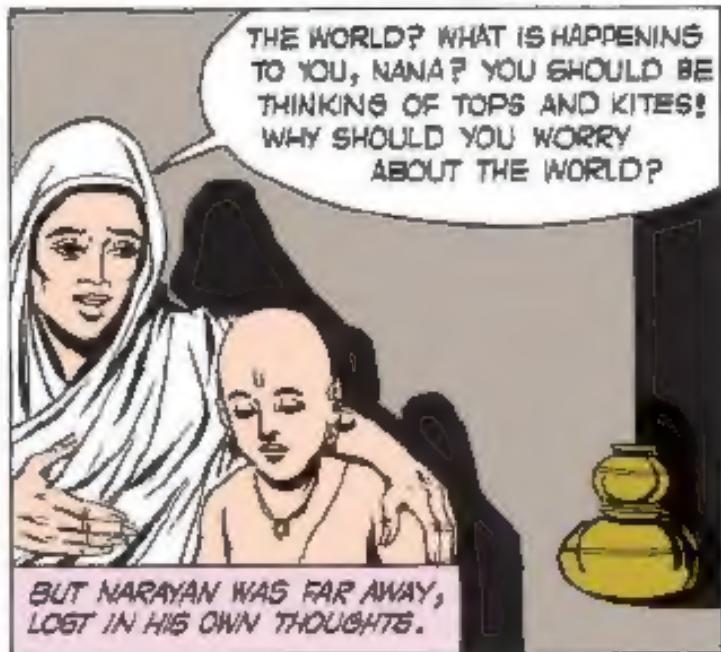
NARAYAN RUSHED INTO HIS BROTHER'S ROOM.

DADA, PLEASE INITIATE ME. TEACH ME THE SACRED MANTRA.*

NARAYAN!







* BE AWARE

NARAYAN SUDDENLY TURNED TO THE MAN STANDING BY HIS SIDE.

WHY ARE THEY SAYING 'SAVADHAN'? WHY DO THEY ASK ME TO BE AWARE?



BECAUSE, YOUNG MAN, YOU WILL NOW ASSUME NEW RESPONSIBILITIES. AS A HOUSEHOLDER YOU WILL HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR WIFE AND REAR YOUR CHILDREN.



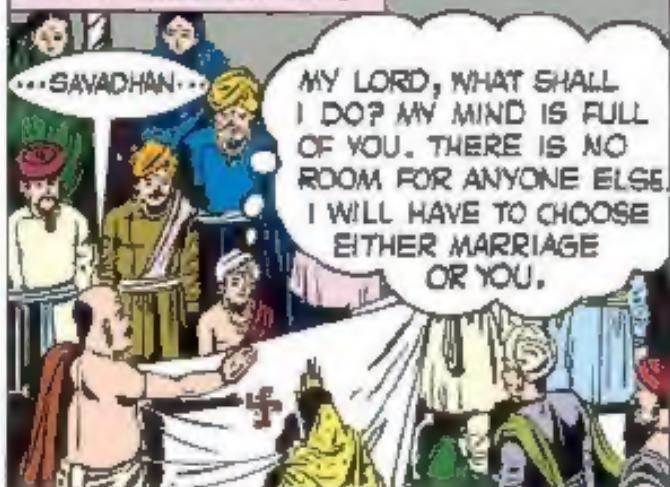
NARAYAN'S THOUGHTS RACED AHEAD.

SAVADHAN—
BEWARE! IF...IF...
AFTER MARRIAGE,
I AM STILL LOST IN
GOD, I SHALL FAIL IN
MY DUTIES AS A
HOUSEHOLDER.



THE PRIESTS CHANTED THE CRUCIAL WORD FOR THE SECOND TIME.

...SAVADHAN...
MY LORD, WHAT SHALL
I DO? MY MIND IS FULL
OF YOU. THERE IS NO
ROOM FOR ANYONE ELSE.
I WILL HAVE TO CHOOSE
EITHER MARRIAGE
OR YOU.

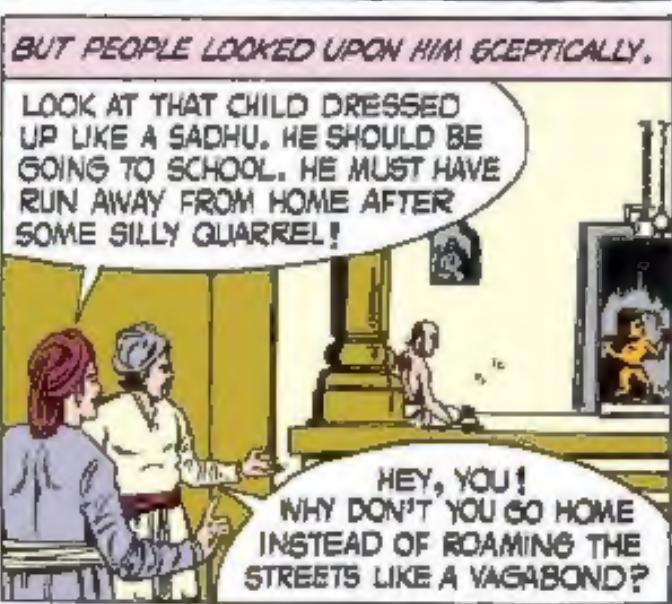
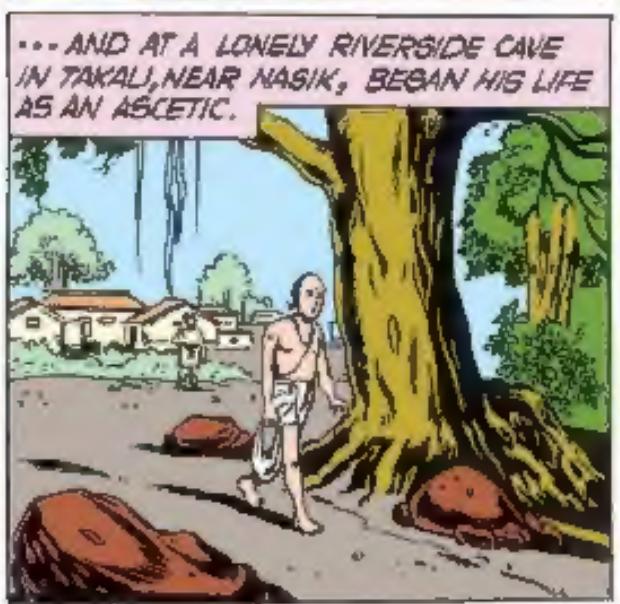
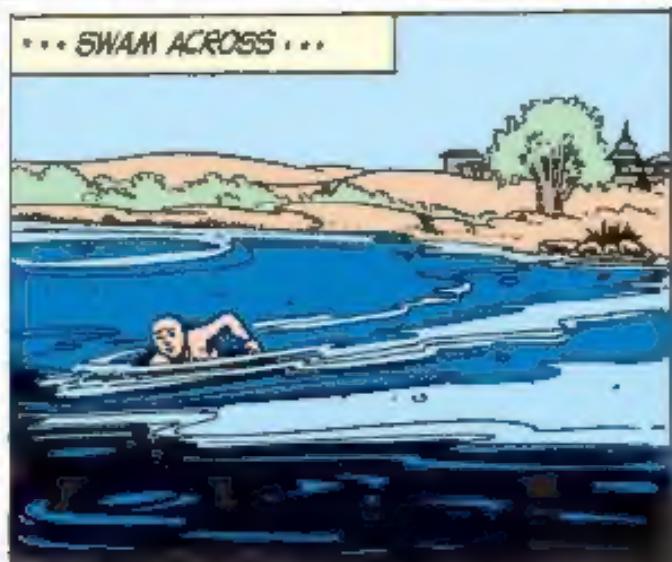
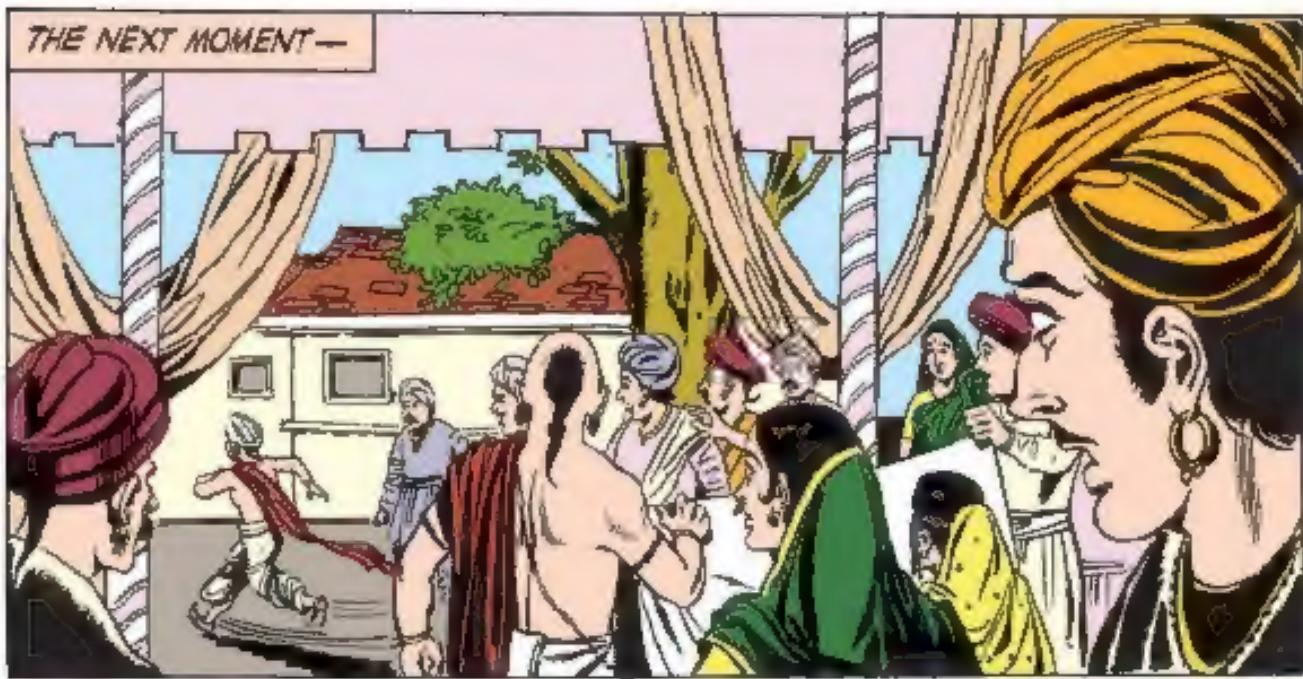


WHEN THE WORD WAS BEING CHANTED FOR THE THIRD AND LAST TIME—

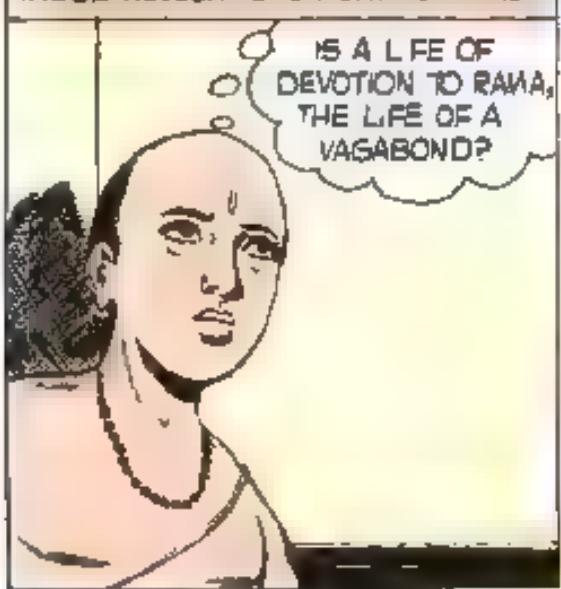
...SAVA...

I CHOOSE
YOU MY
LORD...





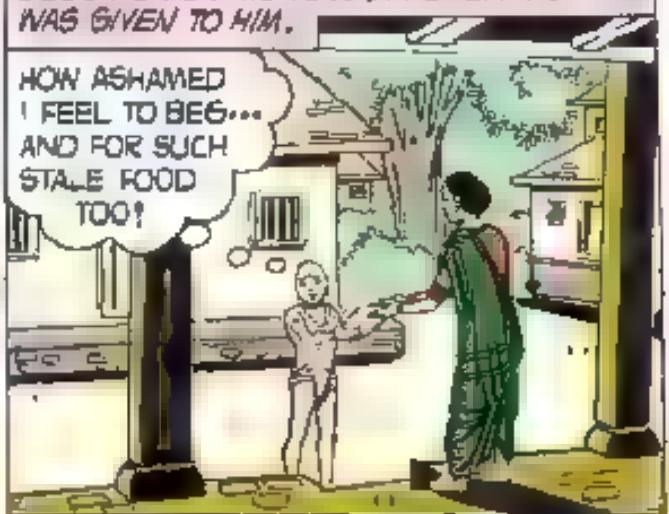
THESE ACCUSATIONS HURT RAMDAS.



THOUGHTS OF HOME TROUBLED THE YOUNG BOY.



HOW ASHAMED
I FEEL TO BEG...
AND FOR SUCH
STALE FOOD
TOO!



BUT NEVER DID HE WAVER FROM HIS CHOSEN PATH.



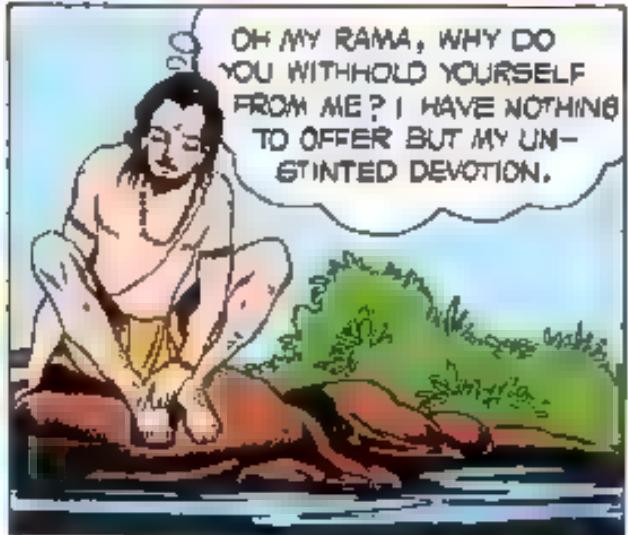
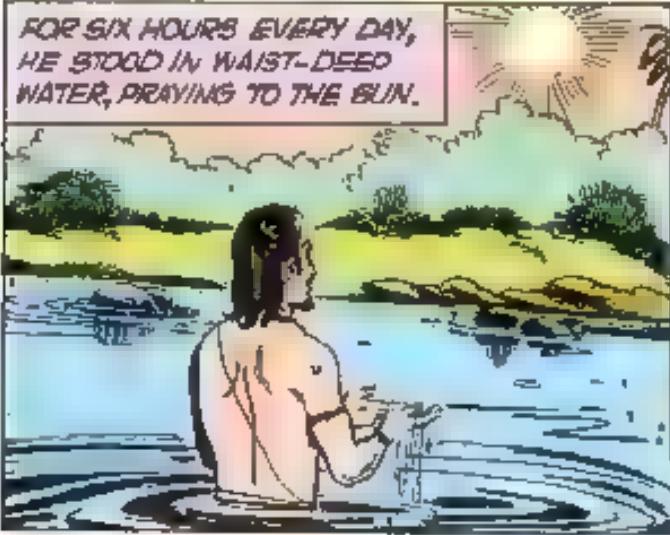
WITH SINGLE-MINDED DEVOTION, HE USED EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO ADVANCE HIMSELF. HE LISTENED TO THE DISCOURSES OF THE PANDITS.



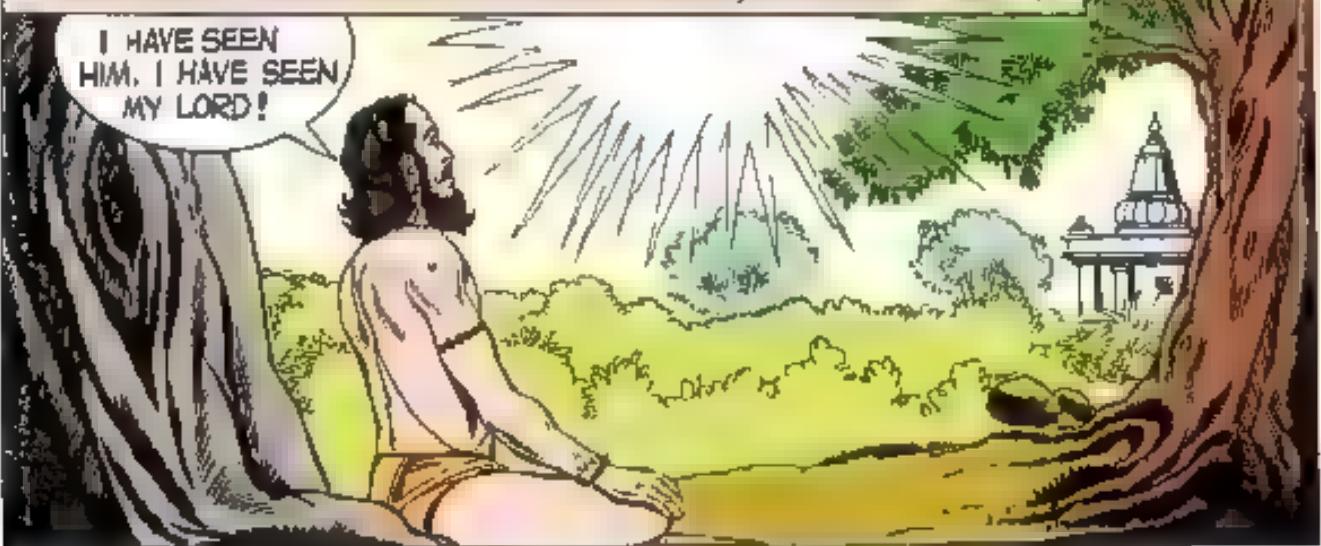
HE POURED OVER THE ANCIENT TEXTS.



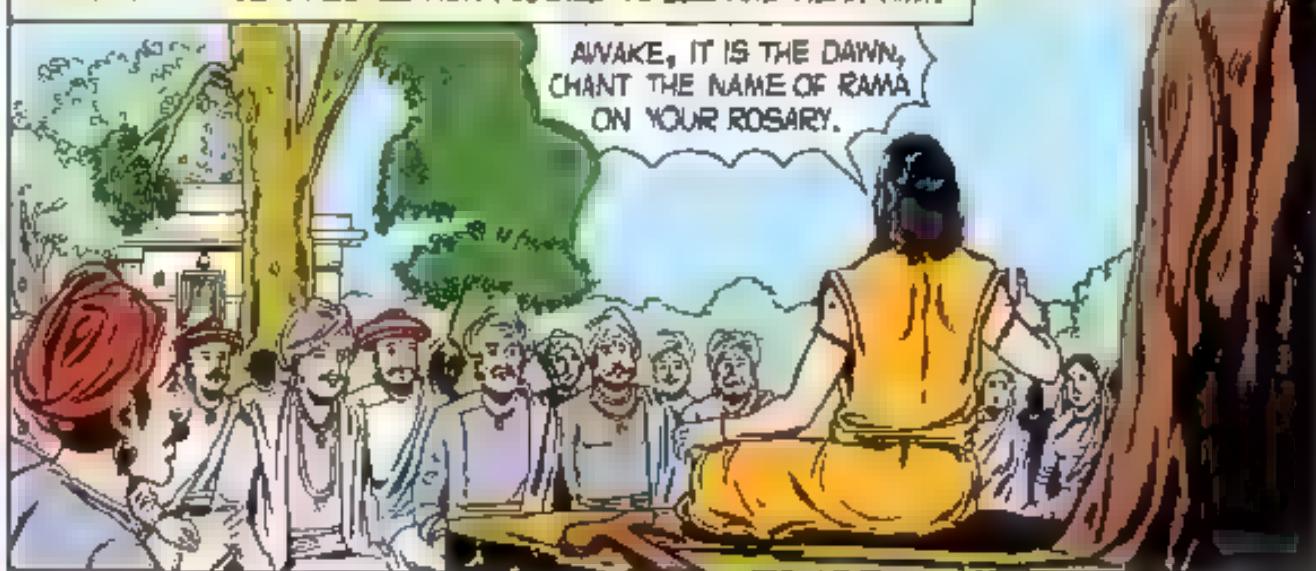
FOR SIX HOURS EVERY DAY, HE STOOD IN WAIST-DEEP WATER, PRAYING TO THE SUN.



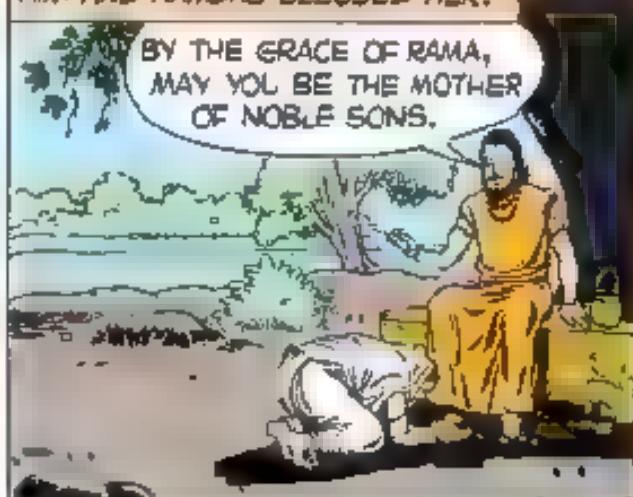
AFTER TWELVE LONG YEARS OF SUCH PENANCE, HE WAS REWARDED.



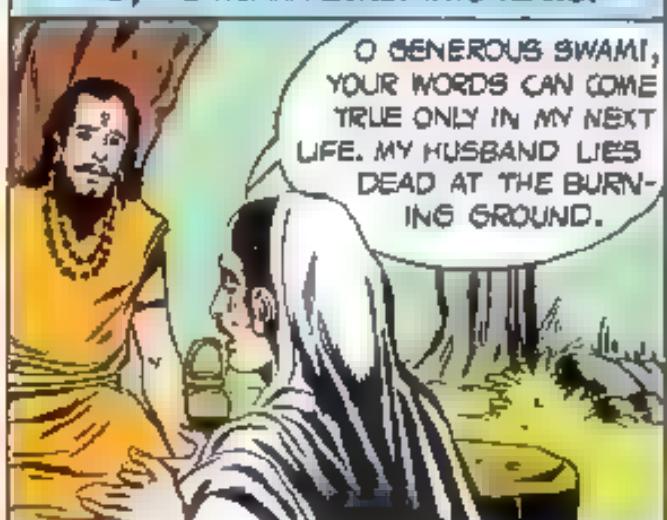
NO LONGER WAS RAMDAS THE UNBURE, AWKWARD BOY. A NEW CONFIDENCE MADE HIM A SEER AND A POET. PEOPLE NOW FLOCKED TO SEE AND HEAR HIM.



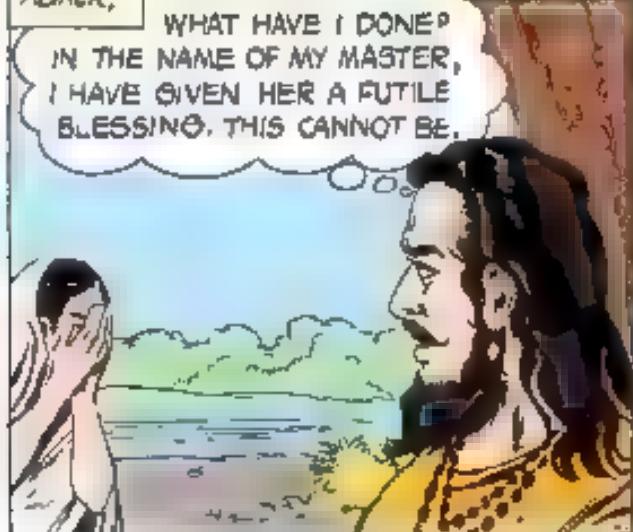
ONE DAY, A YOUNG WOMAN APPROACHED HIM AND RAMDAS BLESSED HER.



AT THIS, THE WOMAN BURST INTO TEARS.



FOR A MOMENT, RAMDAS WAS TAKEN ABACK.

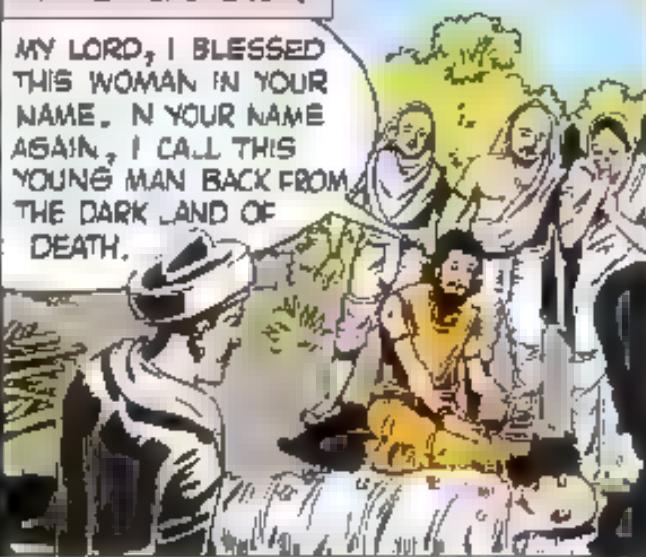


GOOD WOMAN, LEAD ME TO YOUR HUSBAND.



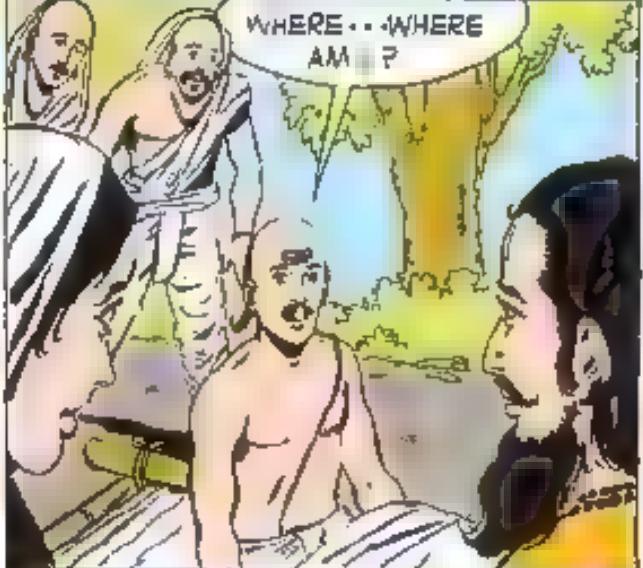
AT THE BURNING GHAT, TAKING THE NAME OF RAMA, RAMDAS SPRINKLED HOLY WATER ON THE DEAD BODY.

MY LORD, I BLESSED THIS WOMAN IN YOUR NAME. IN YOUR NAME AGAIN, I CALL THIS YOUNG MAN BACK FROM THE DARK LAND OF DEATH.



TO THE ASTONISHMENT OF ALL AROUND, GIRDHARPANT, THE DEAD MAN, SAT UP.

WHERE... WHERE AM I?



OVERJOYED, THE COUPLE BOWED TO RAMDAS!

...SWAMIJI, OUR FIRST SON SHALL BE LAID AT YOUR FEET AS YOUR DISCIPLE.

GLORY TO RAMA, RAGHUVIR SAMARTH.*



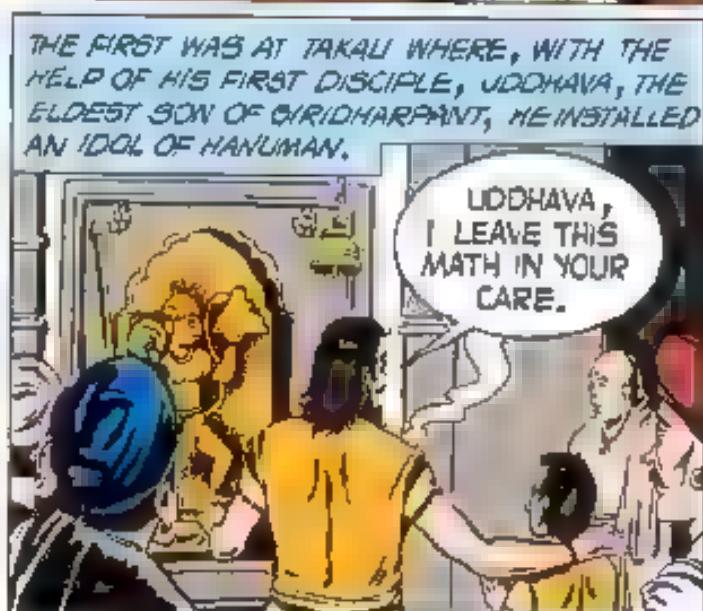
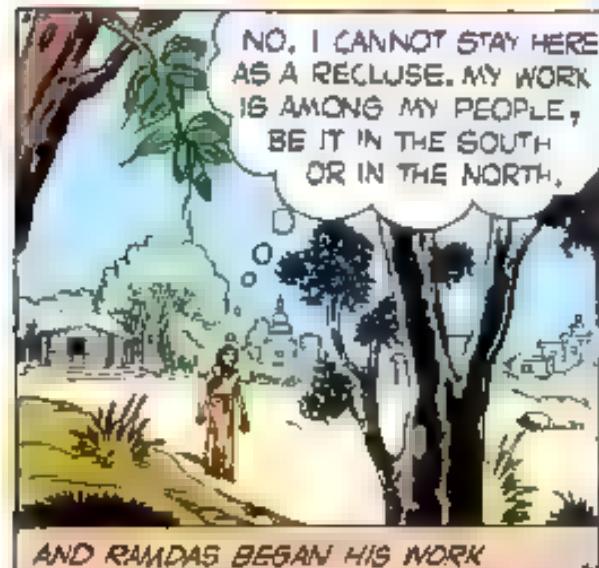
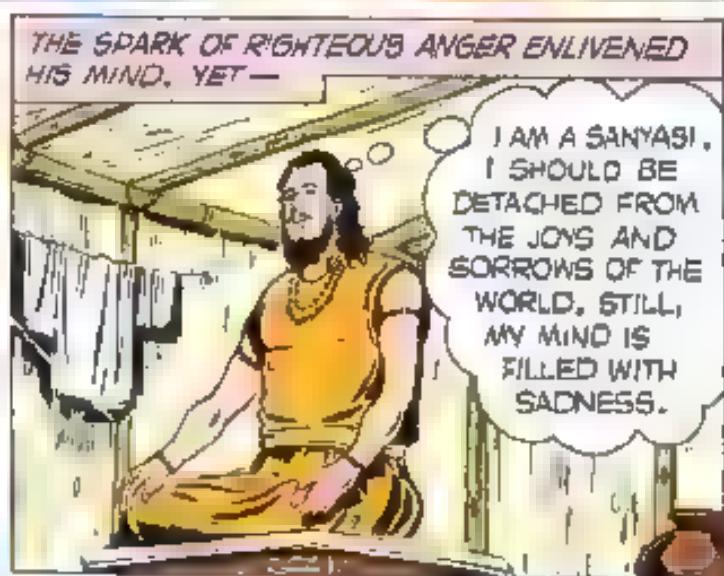
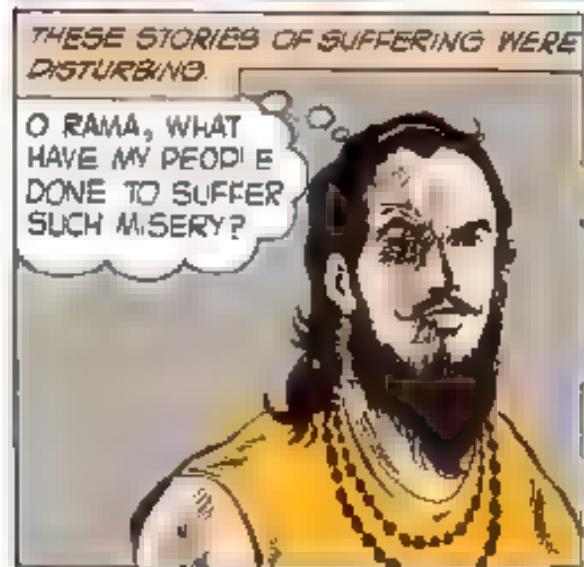
RAMDAS' FAME SPREAD. PEOPLE CAME TO SEE HIM AND RECEIVE HIS BLESSINGS. THEY ALSO BROUGHT HIM NEWS OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN OTHER REGIONS.

OH, SWAMIJI,
PEACE REIGNS IN
THIS PART OF THE
COUNTRY. BUT IT IS
NOT SO EVERYWHERE.

WHAT
DO YOU
MEAN?



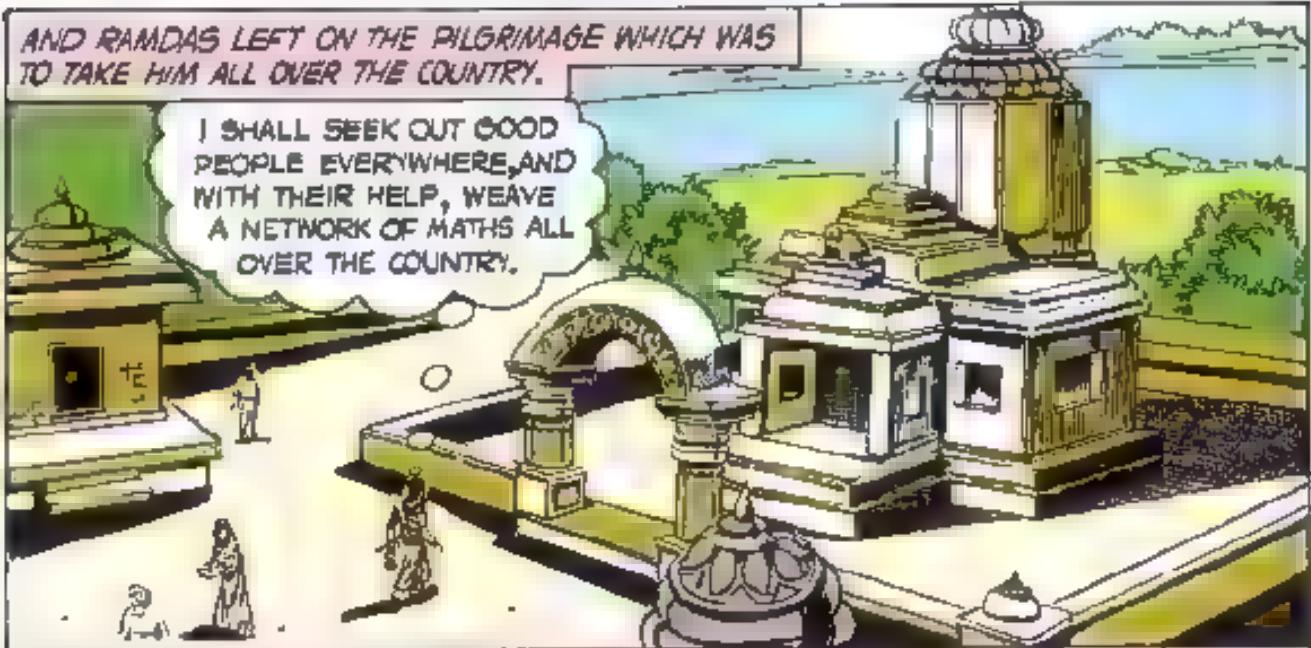
* THE OMNIPOTENT



* RELIGIOUS MONASTERIES

AND RAMDAS LEFT ON THE PILGRIMAGE WHICH WAS TO TAKE HIM ALL OVER THE COUNTRY.

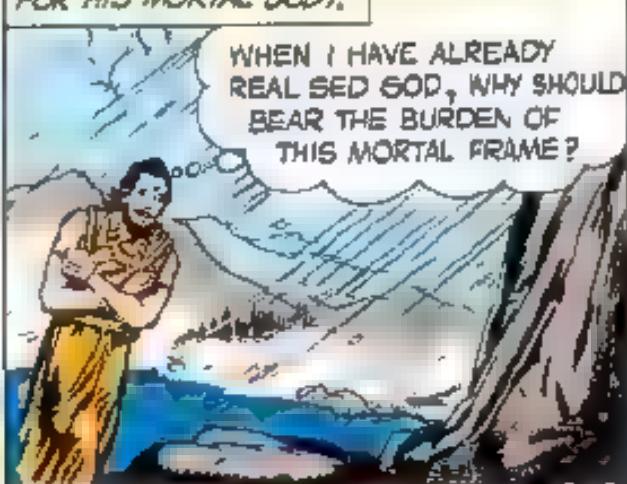
I SHALL SEEK OUT GOOD PEOPLE EVERYWHERE, AND WITH THEIR HELP, WEAVE A NETWORK OF MATHS ALL OVER THE COUNTRY.



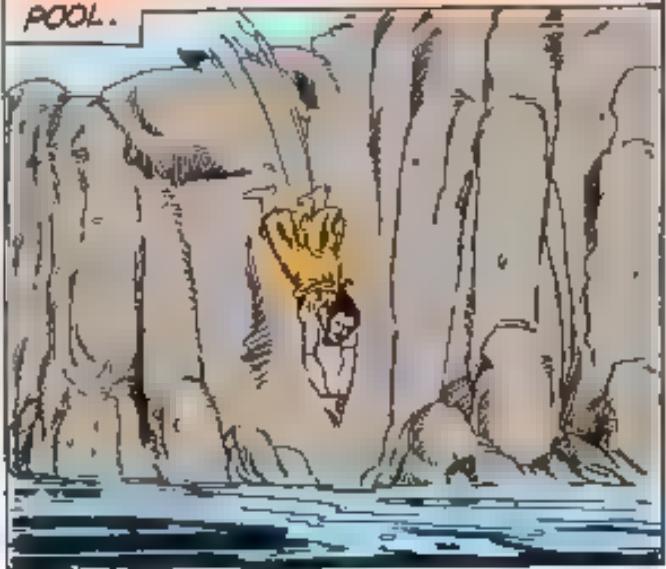
HE VISITED KASHI, AYODHYA, MATHURA AND DIWARAKA WHERE HE ESTABLISHED HANUMAN TEMPLES AND MATHS HEADED BY HIS CHOSEN DISCIPLES.

HE THEN SET OUT FOR HOLY BADRI-KEDAR IN THE HIMALAYAS. ON HIS WAY THERE, HE WAS OVERCOME BY A SUDDEN REVULSION FOR HIS MORTAL BODY.

WHEN I HAVE ALREADY REALISED GOD, WHY SHOULD BEAR THE BURDEN OF THIS MORTAL FRAME?

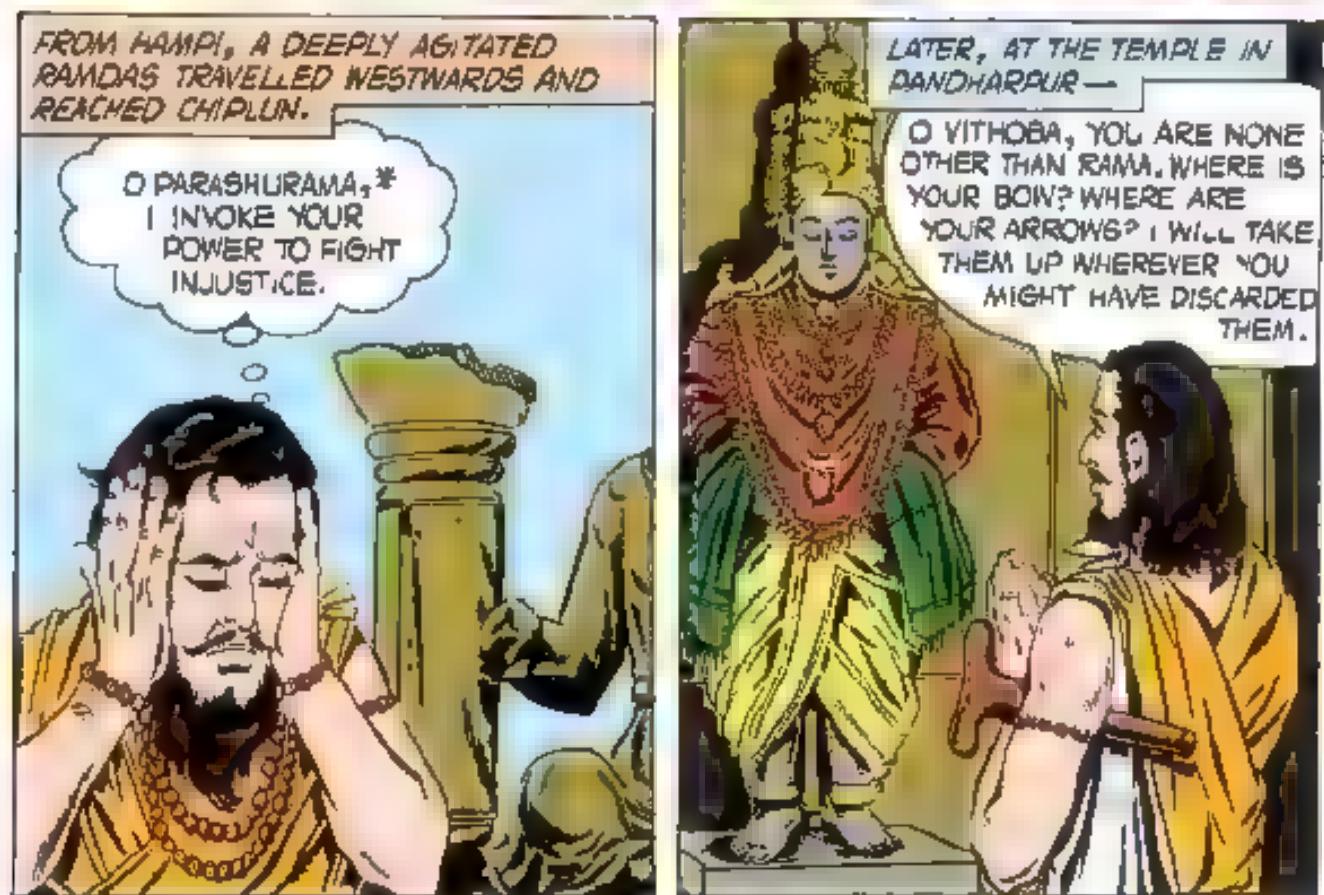
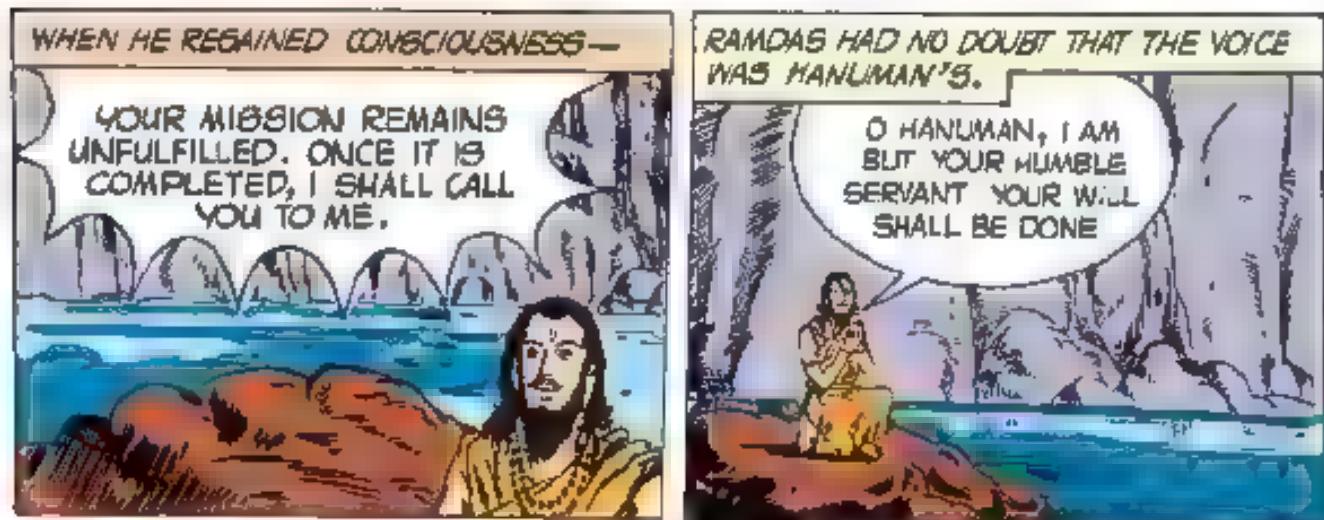


AND RAMDAS THREW HIMSELF INTO AN ICY POOL.



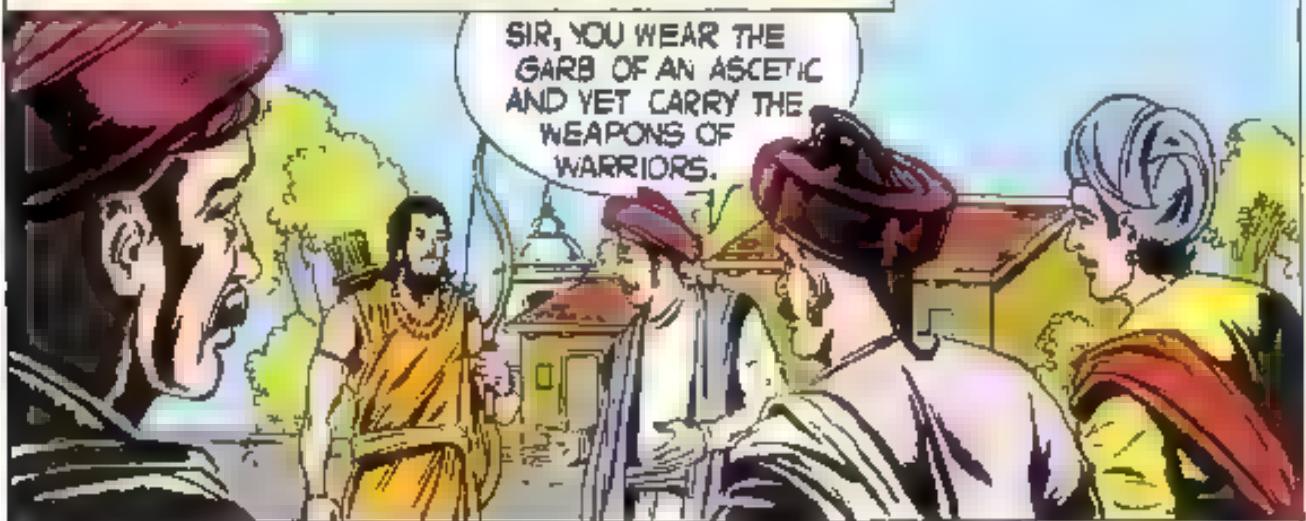
BUT SAVED BY THE HAND OF GOD, HE LAY UNCONSCIOUS ON THE EDGE OF THE POOL.





* AN AVATAR OF VISHNU

RAMDAS HAD DECIDED UPON ACTION AND LATER, WHEN HE REACHED PAITHAN, THE PEOPLE THERE WERE AMAZED TO FIND THIS ASCETIC CARRYING A BOW AND ARROWS.



THE BRAHMANS OF PAITHAN
WANTED TO TEST RAMDAS.

IF YOU ARE A
MARKSMAN, PROVE
IT. BRING DOWN
THAT BIRD.



RAMDAS TOOK AIM AND HIS ARROW BROUGHT
DOWN THE BIRD.



THE BRAHMANS WERE SHOCKED.

OH, NO! SIR, HOW COULD
YOU! YOU HAVE SINNED
IN KILLING THIS INNO-
CENT BIRD. YOU
MUST ATONE FOR IT.

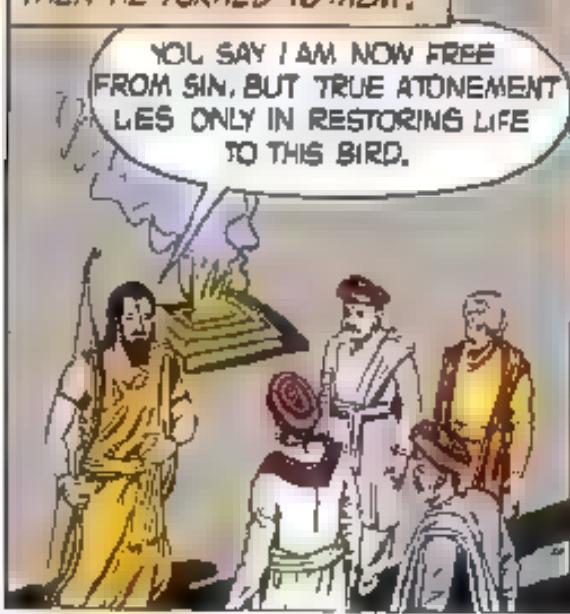


RAMDAS PERFORMED THE RITES OF ATONE-
MENT AS LAID DOWN BY THE BRAHMANS.



THEN HE TURNED TO THEM.

YOU SAY I AM NOW FREE FROM SIN, BUT TRUE ATONEMENT LIES ONLY IN RESTORING LIFE TO THIS BIRD.



RAMDAS GENTLY PICKED UP THE LIMP BIRD,

RAMA, YOUR DEVOTEE BEGS YOU TO WASH HIM CLEAR OF HIS SIN. LET THE BIRD COME ALIVE AGAIN.



THE BIRD SPRANG TO LIFE...



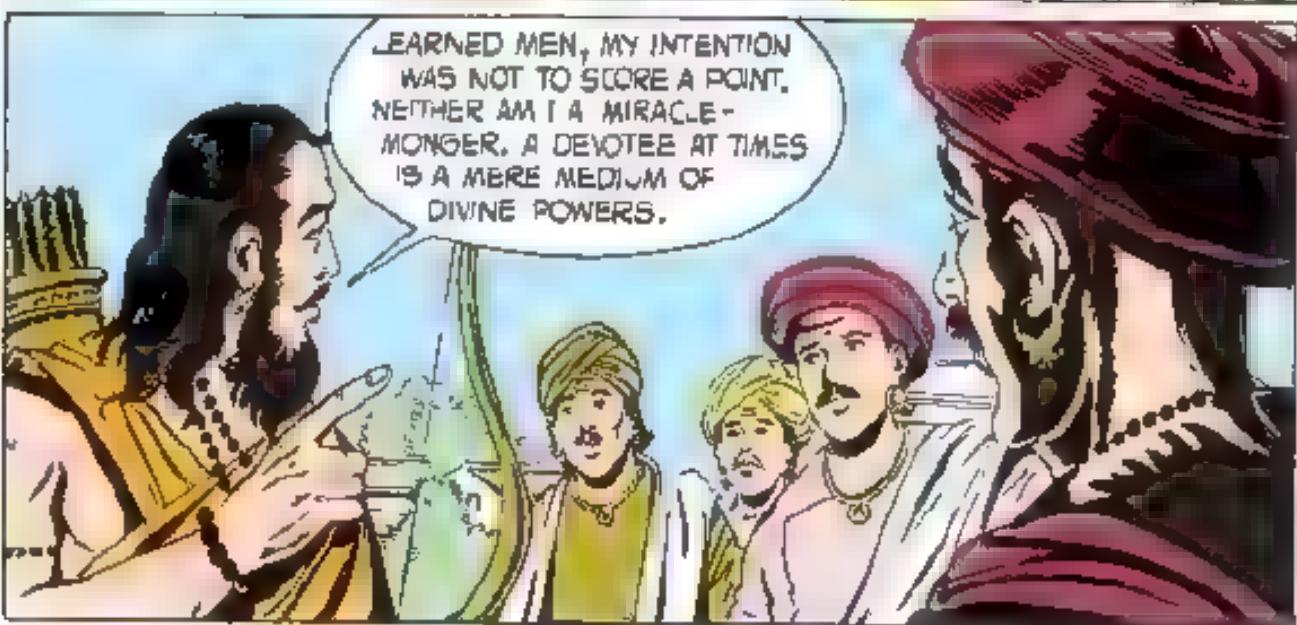
...SPREAD ITS WINGS AND SOARED AWAY TO FREEDOM.

MIRACULOUS!

GREAT ONE, YOU ARE A SAMARTH. TRULY A SAMARTH!

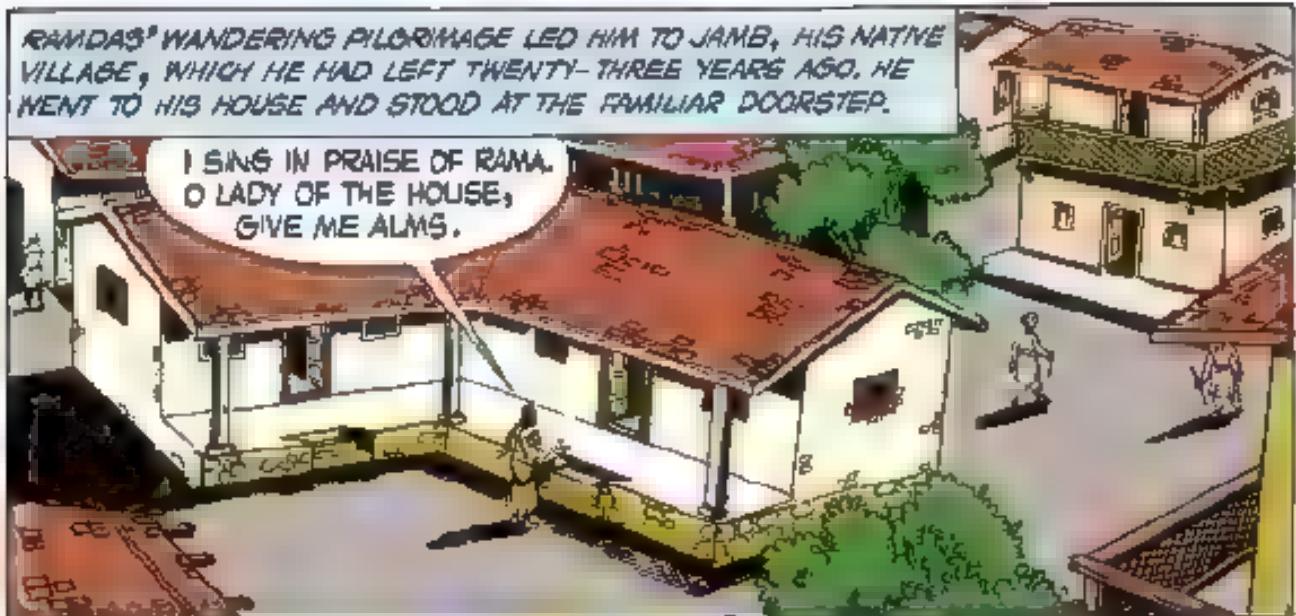


LEARNED MEN, MY INTENTION WAS NOT TO SCORE A POINT. NEITHER AM I A MIRACLE-MONGER. A DEVOTEE AT TIMES IS A MERE MEDIUM OF DIVINE POWERS.



RAMDAS' WANDERING PILGRIMAGE LED HIM TO JAMB, HIS NATIVE VILLAGE, WHICH HE HAD LEFT TWENTY-THREE YEARS AGO. HE WENT TO HIS HOUSE AND STOOD AT THE FAMILIAR DOORSTEP.

I SING IN PRAISE OF RAMA.
O LADY OF THE HOUSE,
GIVE ME ALMS.



GANSADHAR'S WIFE DID NOT RECOGNISE RAMDAS.

SISTER,
DON'T YOU
KNOW ME?



AND RAMDAS WALKED IN.

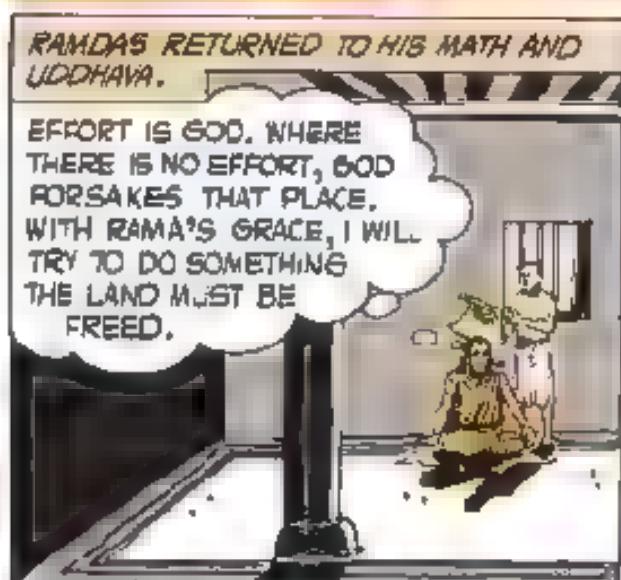
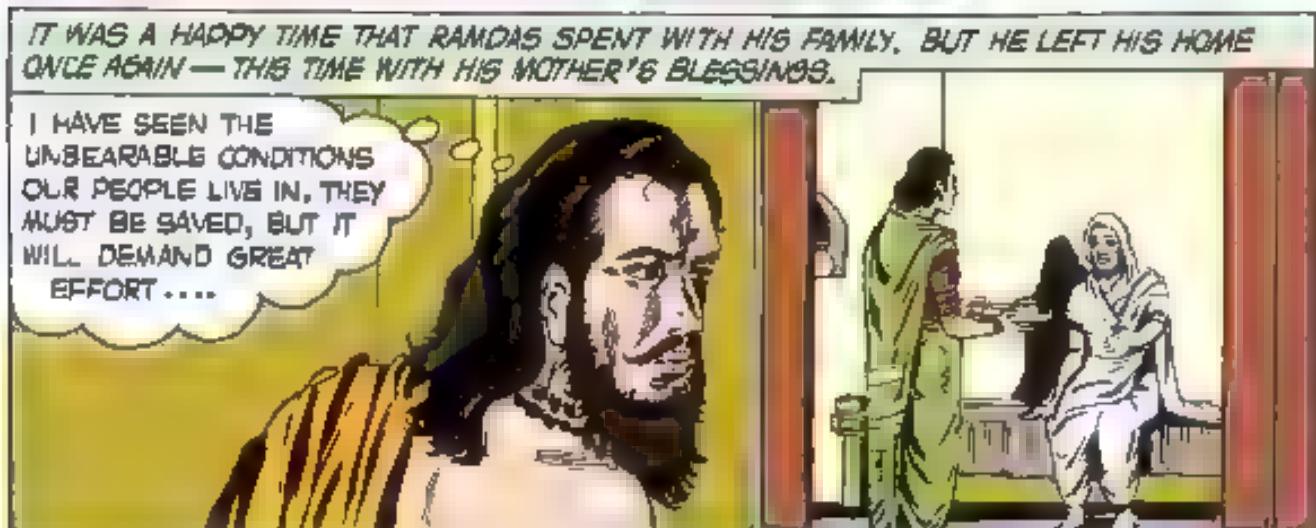
MOTHER!

THAT VOICE, THOSE STEPS! IT COULD ONLY BE MY NARAYAN.

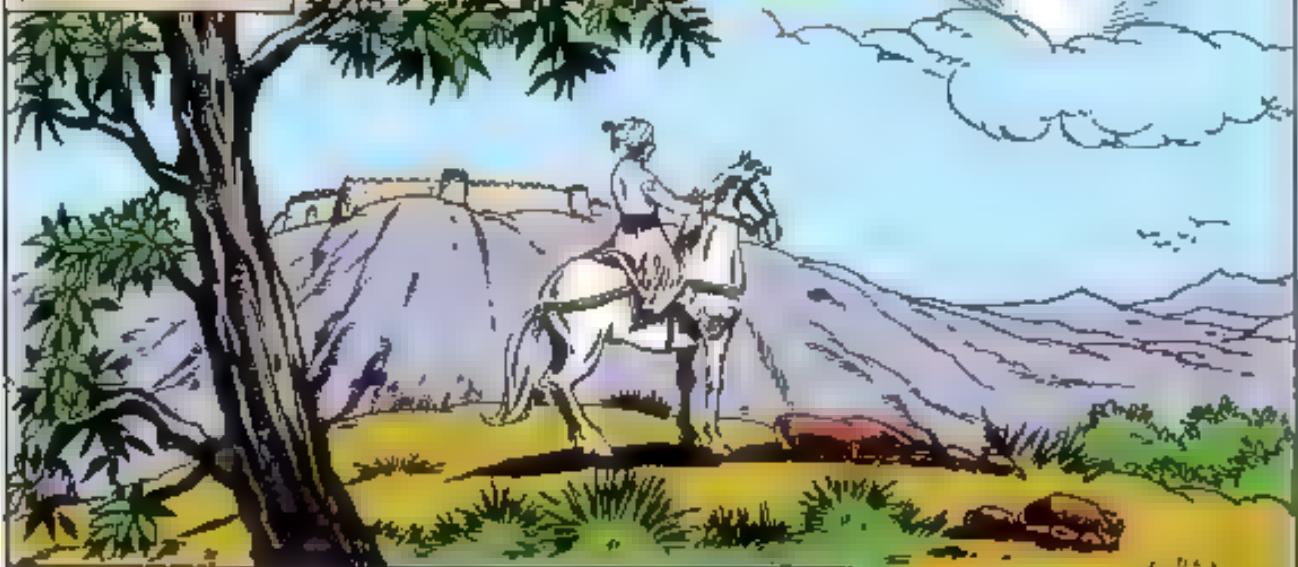
EMOTION WELLED UP WITHIN THE BLIND, OLD RANUBAI.

THAT SAME BUMP ON THE FOREHEAD, THE SAME LOVING ARMS. MY SON, IS THAT REALLY YOU? IF ONLY MY BLIND EYES COULD SEE YOUR DEAR FACE AGAIN!





THE LEADER RAMDAS WAS LOOKING FOR WAS STILL A YOUNGSTER— SHIVAJI, THE SON OF A MARATHA NOBLEMAN, SHAHJI BHOSLE.



YOUNG SHIVAJI SEEMED TO KNOW EVERY STONE IN THE WILD, HILLY TERRAIN OF MAVAL, WHERE HE GREW UP.

SHIVAJI HAD HEARD STORIES OF THE GREAT HEROES OF THE PAST FROM HIS MOTHER, JIJABAI.



MY SON, LET THE NOBLE EXAMPLES OF RAMA AND THE PANDAVAS GUIDE YOU. YOU MUST FIGHT OPPRESSORS AND DEFEND THE RIGHTEOUS.

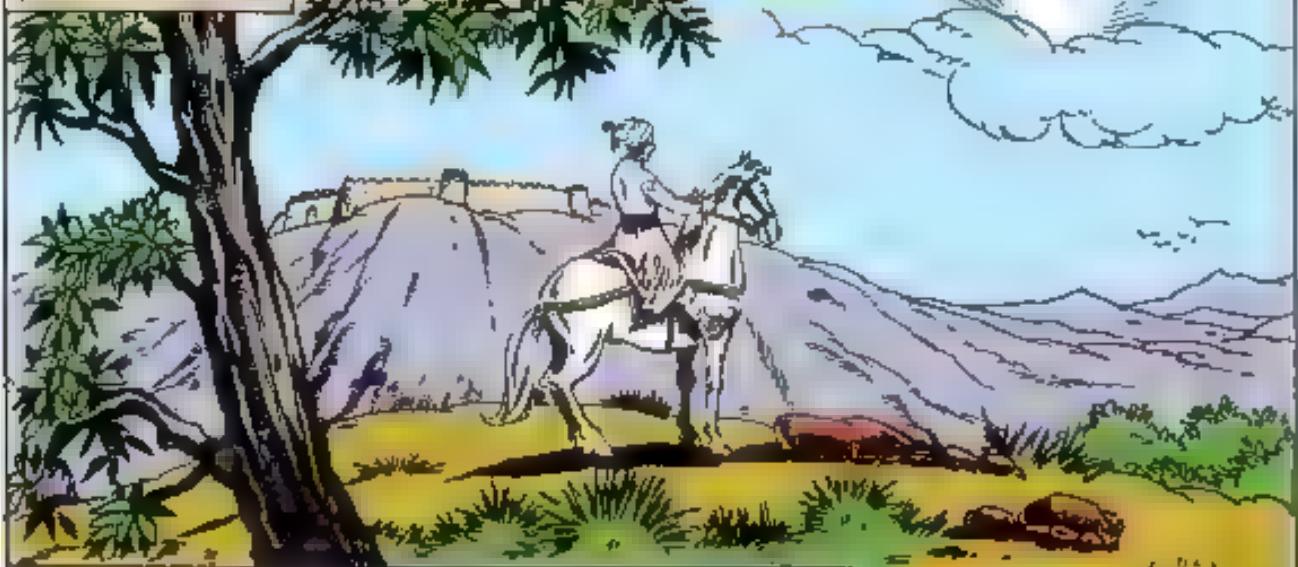
I WILL, MOTHER. I'LL MAKE THAT MY GOAL.

SHIVAJI'S COMRADES WERE THE HARDY, LOYAL YOUTHS OF MAVAL, IN WHOSE COMPANY HE LEARNT TO RIDE AND FIGHT



* IN WESTERN MAHARASHTRA

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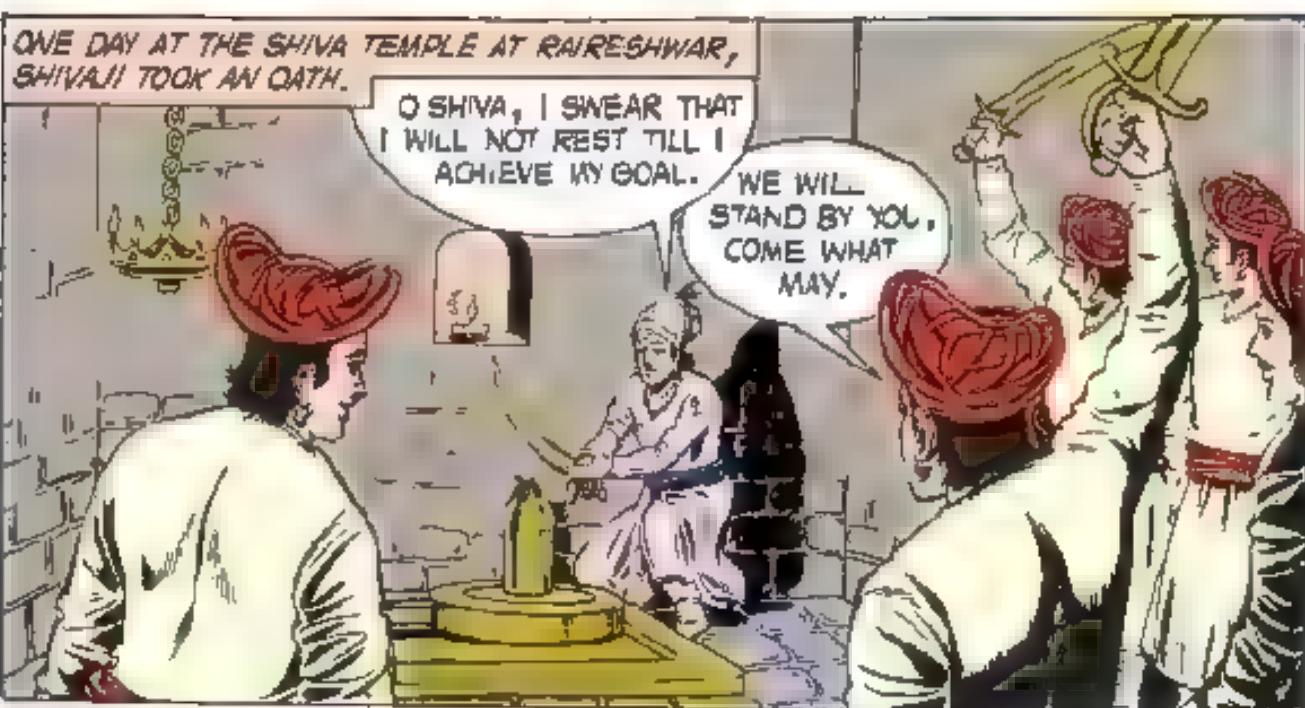


* IN WESTERN MAHARASHTRA

ONE DAY AT THE SHIVA TEMPLE AT RAJRESHWAR,
SHIVAJI TOOK AN OATH.

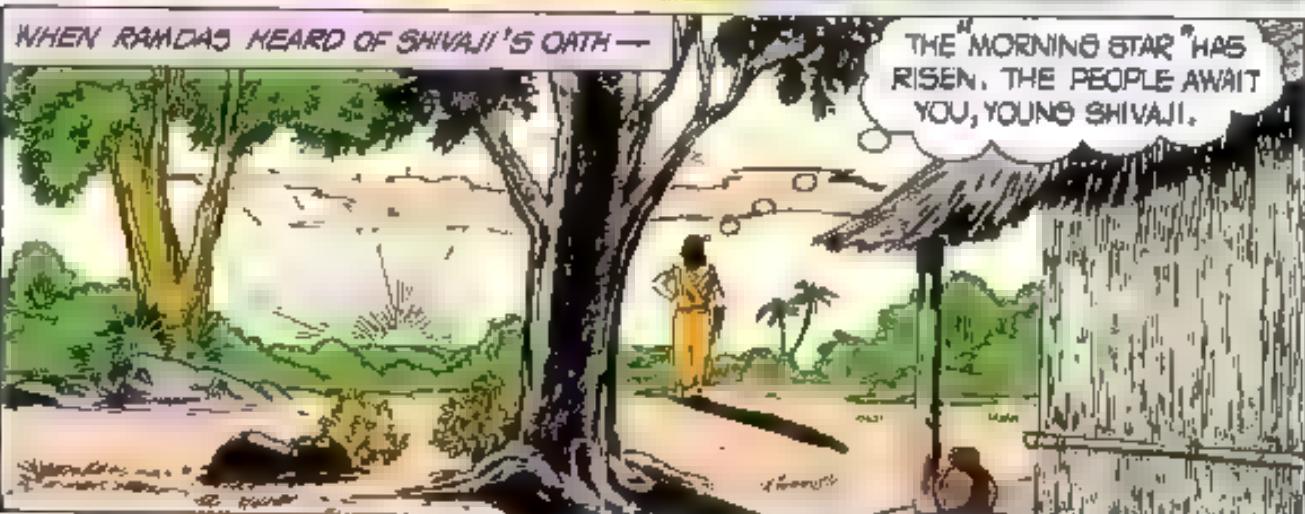
O SHIVA, I SWEAR THAT
I WILL NOT REST TILL I
ACHIEVE MY GOAL.

WE WILL
STAND BY YOU,
COME WHAT
MAY.



WHEN RAMDAS HEARD OF SHIVAJI'S OATH —

THE "MORNING STAR" HAS
RISEN. THE PEOPLE AWAIT
YOU, YOUNG SHIVAJI.



RAMDAS AND SHIVAJI HAD HEARD OF EACH OTHER. THEY MET FOR THE FIRST TIME
AT A RAMA-NAVAMI FESTIVAL AT MASUR. SAINT AND WARRIOR WERE EQUALLY
IMRESSED.

HE'S YOUNG, BUT
HE CARRIES HIMSELF
LIKE A PRINCE. HE WILL
LIBERATE THE
LAND.

HE TOWERS OVER
ALL. GENTLE
AND YET
STRONG!



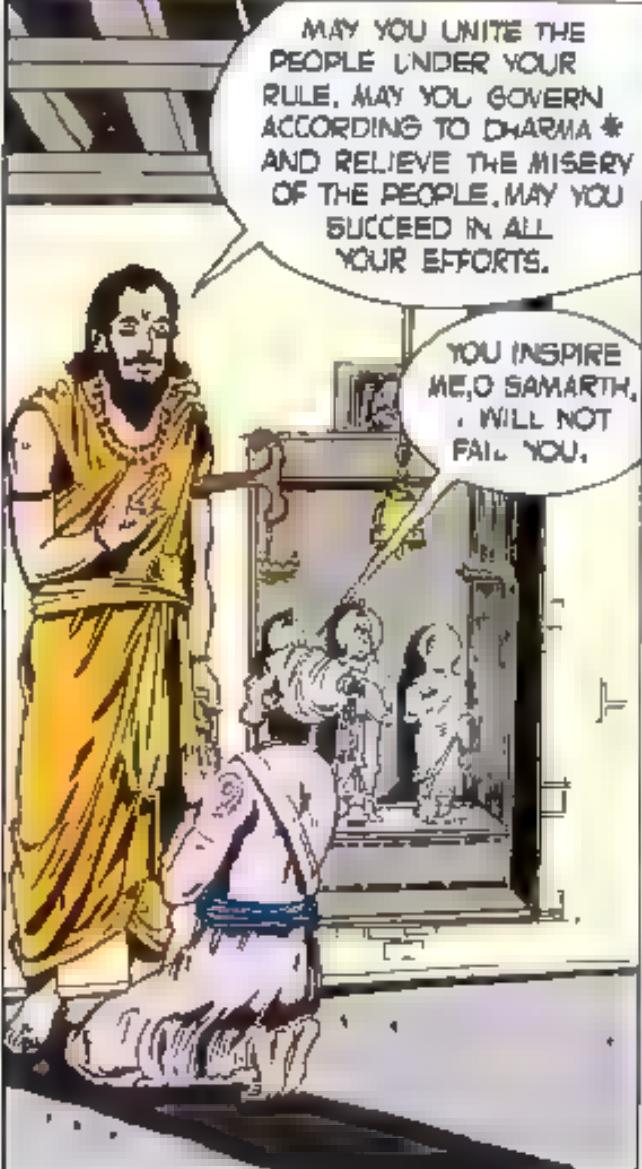
LATER, THEY MET AGAIN AT SHINGANAWADI. AT SHIVAJI'S REQUEST, RAMDAS INITIATED HIM AS HIS DEVOTEE.

ADORN YOUR BODY
NOT WITH RICH CLOTHES
AND JEWELS, BUT
WITH DISCRETION
AND WISDOM.



MAY YOU UNITE THE
PEOPLE UNDER YOUR
RULE. MAY YOU GOVERN
ACCORDING TO DHARMA *
AND RELIEVE THE MISERY
OF THE PEOPLE. MAY YOU
SUCCEED IN ALL
YOUR EFFORTS.

YOU INSPIRE
ME, O SAMARTH.
I WILL NOT
FAIL YOU.

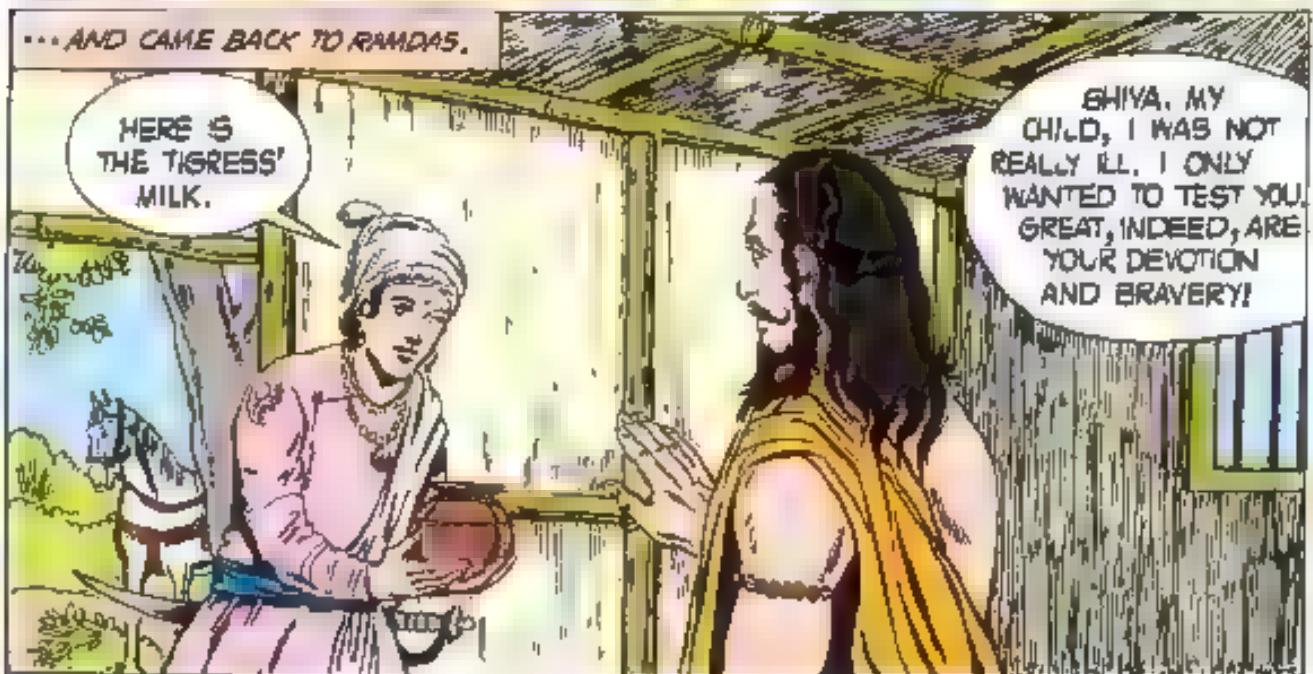
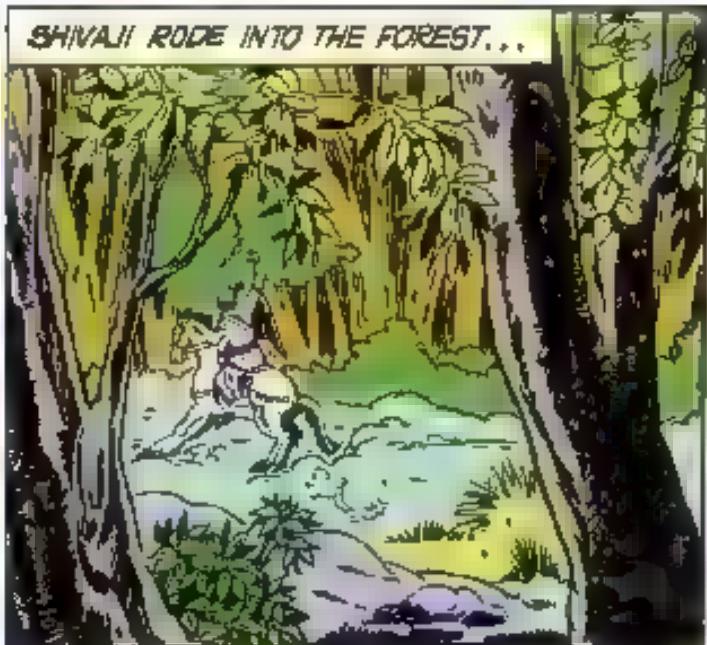
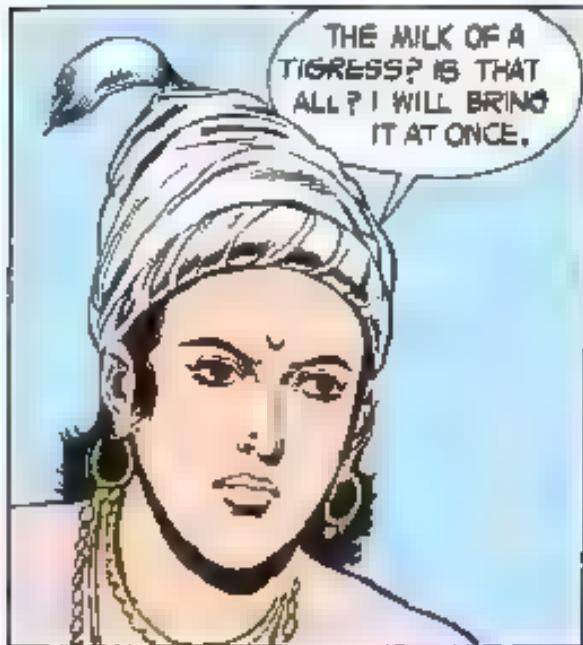


ONE DAY, RAMDAS SENT WORD THAT HE
WAS ILL. SHIVAJI HURRIED TO HIS SIDE.

SAMARTH, I WILL
DO ANYTHING TO MAKE
YOU WELL. PLEASE TELL
ME WHAT I SHOULD
DO.

THE ONLY
MEDICINE THAT WILL
CURE ME IS THE MILK
OF A TIGRESS.





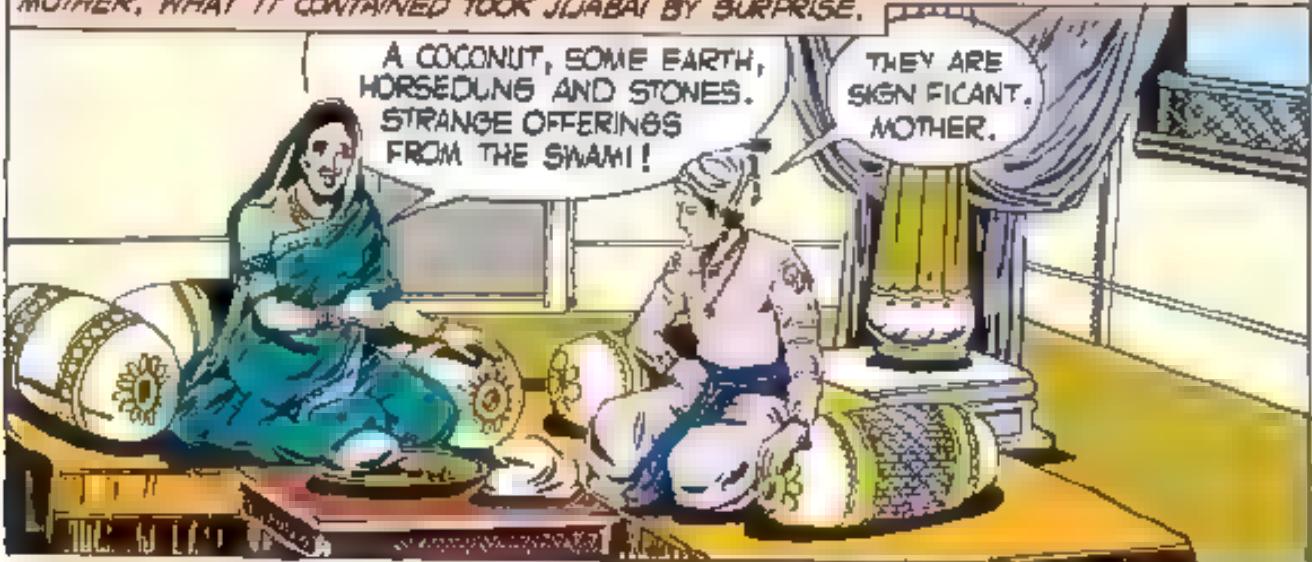
PLEASED WITH SHIVAJI, RAMDAS MADE A SACRED OFFERING TO HIM.



WHEN SHIVAJI REACHED HOME, HE OPENED THE BUNDLE IN THE PRESENCE OF HIS MOTHER. WHAT IT CONTAINED TOOK JIJABAI BY SURPRISE.

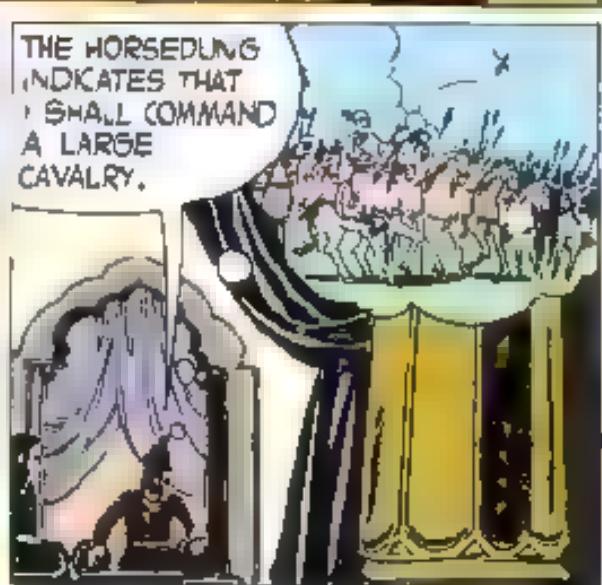
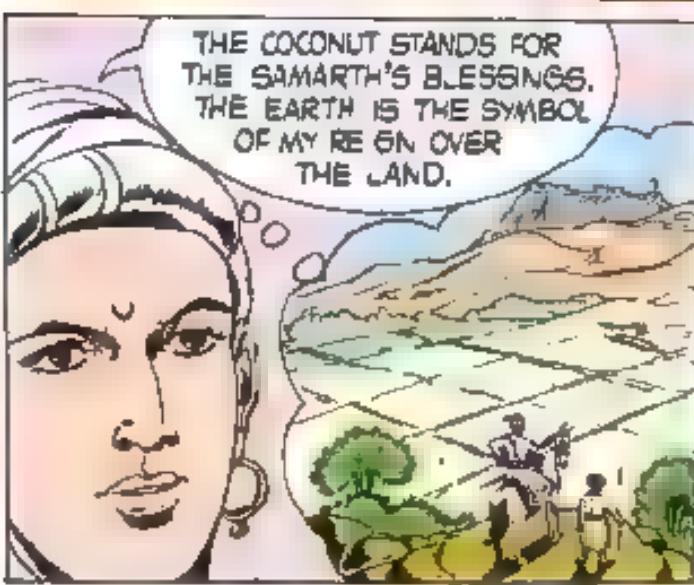
A COCONUT, SOME EARTH,
HORSEDUNG AND STONES.
STRANGE OFFERINGS
FROM THE SWAMI!

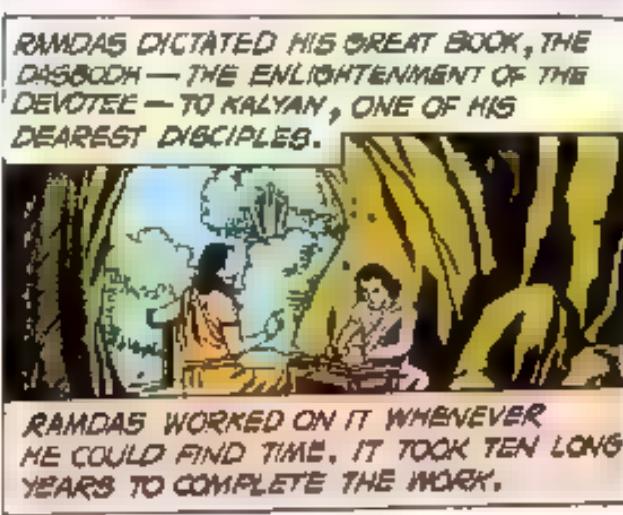
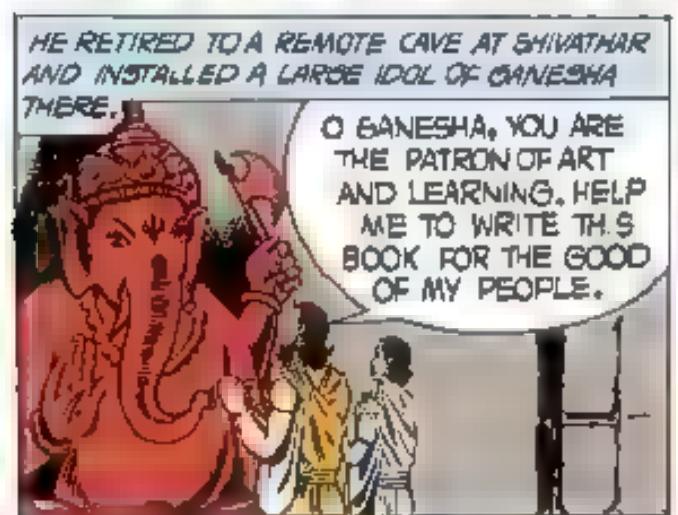
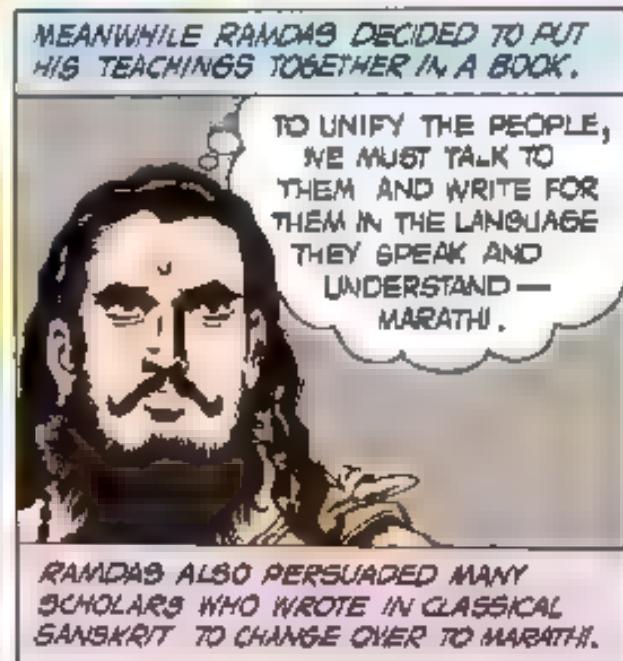
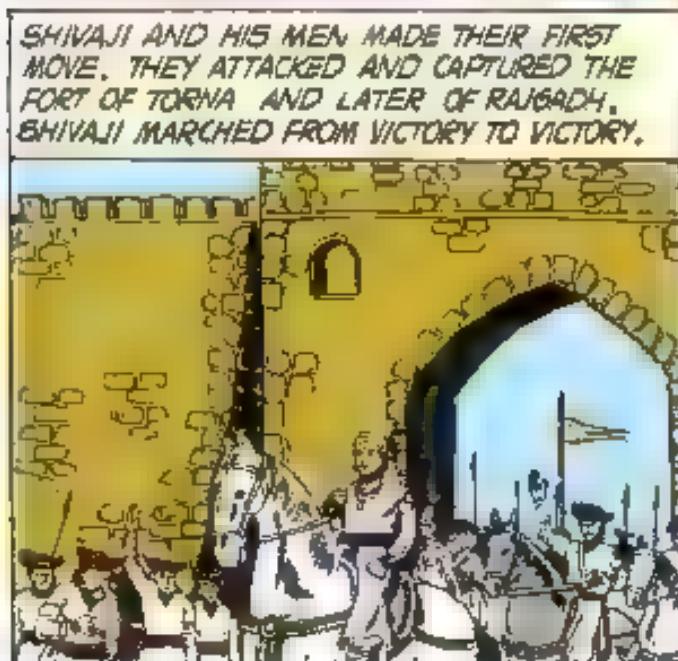
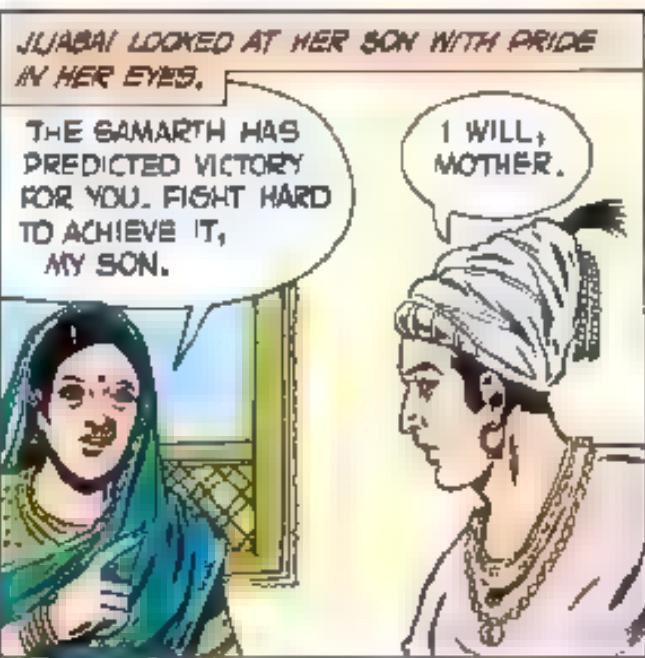
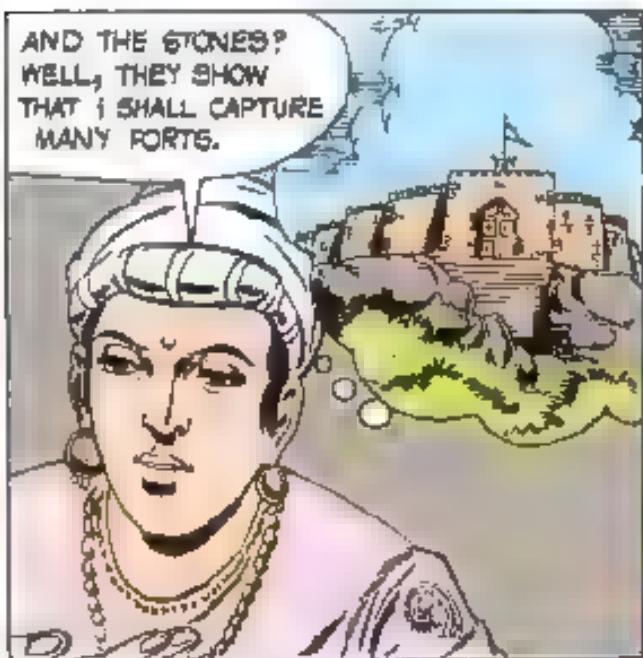
THEY ARE
SIGNIFICANT,
MOTHER.



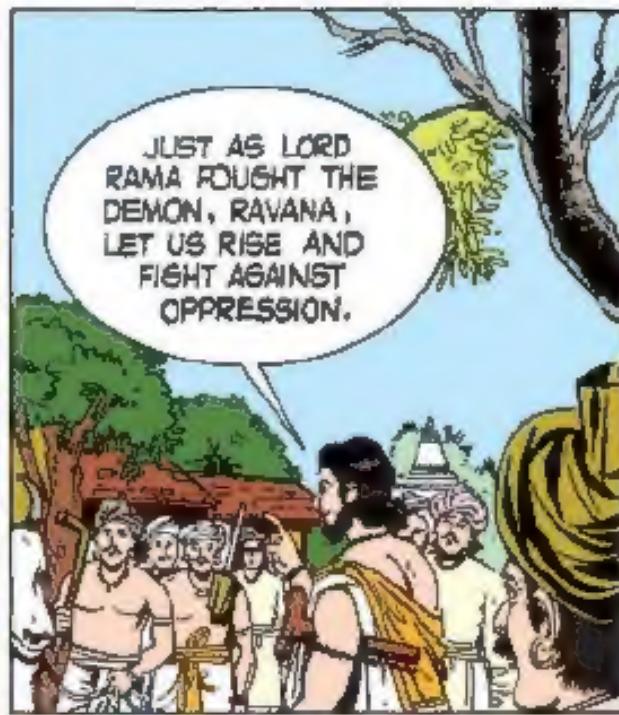
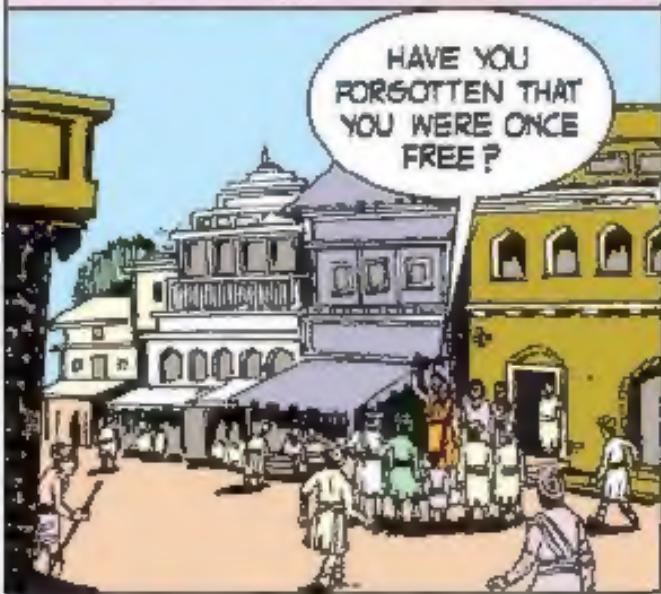
THE COCONUT STANDS FOR
THE SAMARTH'S BLESSINGS.
THE EARTH IS THE SYMBOL
OF MY REIGN OVER
THE LAND.

THE HORSEDUNG
INDICATES THAT
I SHALL COMMAND
A LARGE CAVALRY.

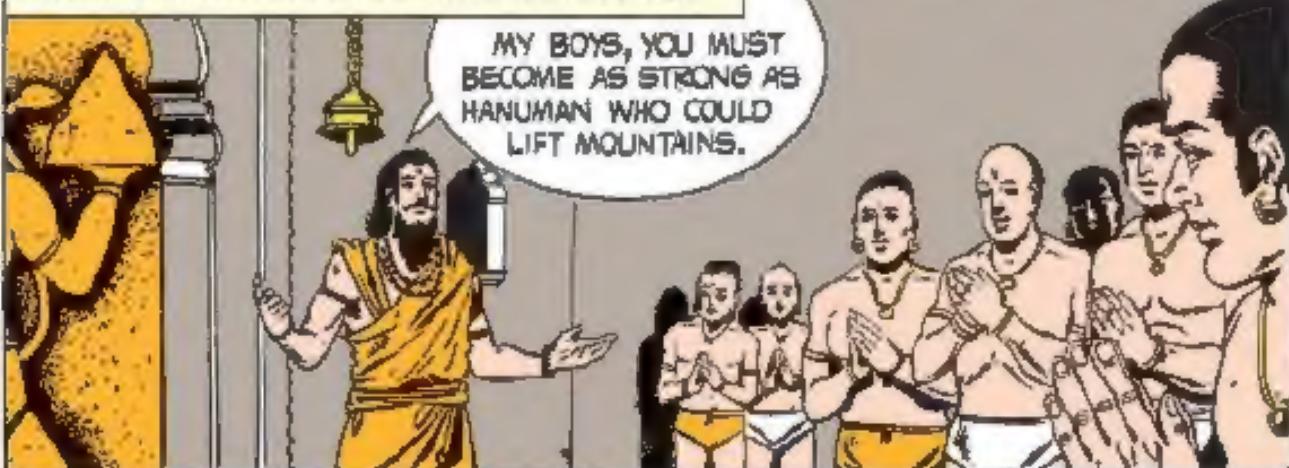




HIS DISCIPLES WENT OUT AMONG THE PEOPLE, HELPING THEM, INSPIRING THEM, AND MOBILISING THEM TO FIGHT INJUSTICE.



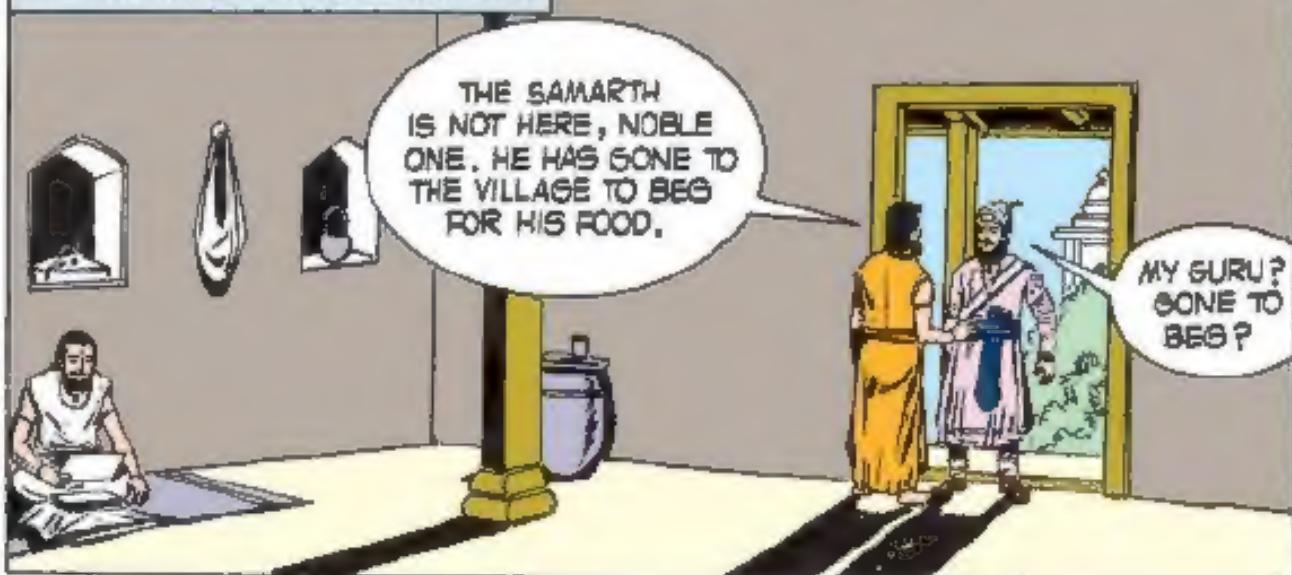
THEY ALSO TRAINED YOUNG MEN AND BOYS IN GYMNASTICS AND THE MARTIAL ARTS. RAMDAS OFTEN VISITED THE TRAINING CENTRES.



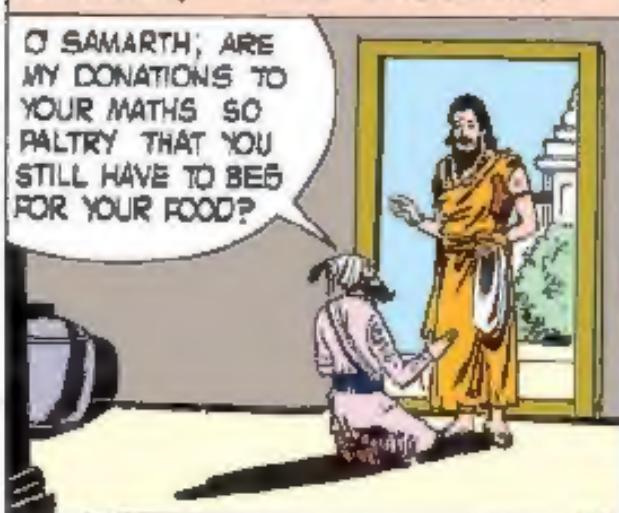
INSPIRED BY THE CALL GIVEN BY RAMDAS, SEVERAL YOUNG MEN CAME FORWARD TO JOIN GHANAI.



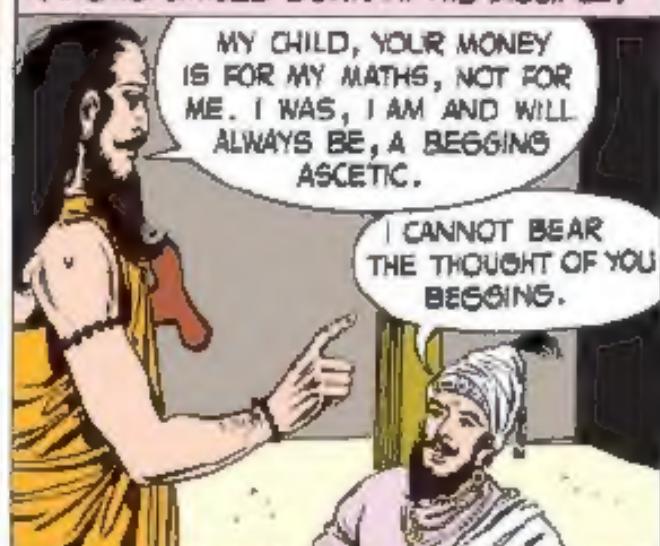
SHIVAJI WOULD OFTEN GO TO RAMDAS FOR ADVICE.
ONE DAY HE CALLED UNEXPECTEDLY.



SHIVAJI WAS UPSET. WHEN RAMDAS RETURNED, HE KNELT BEFORE HIM.

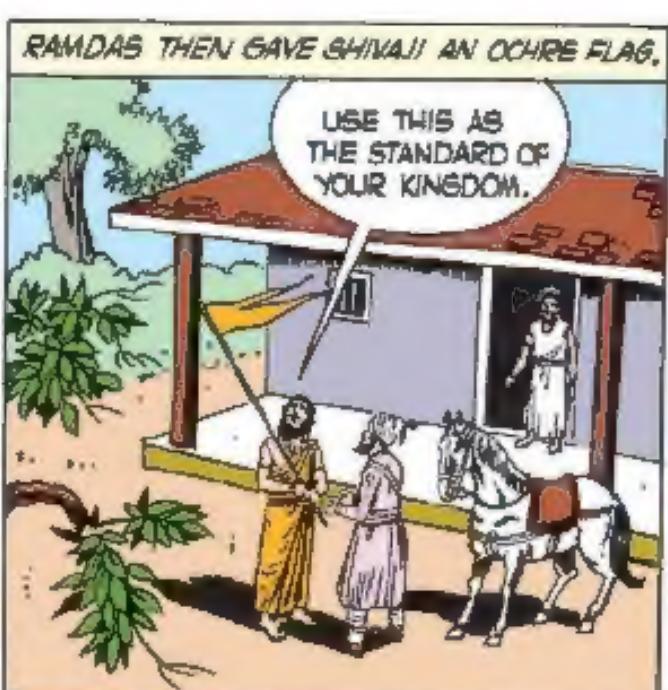
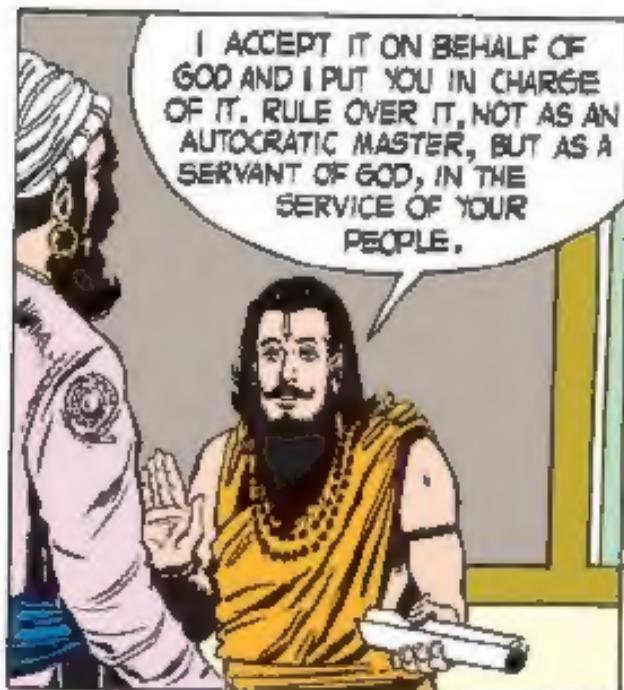


RAMDAS SMILED DOWN AT HIS DISCIPLE.



IN A MOMENTOUS DECISION, SHIVAJI MADE A DEED,
GIFTING AWAY HIS KINGDOM TO RAMDAS.





IT WAS THIS VERY FLAG THAT FLEW ON THE LOFTY PORTS THAT SHIVAJI CAPTURED; WHILE ON THE SHIPS OF SHIVAJI'S NAVY FLUTTERED AN OCHRE GAIL.



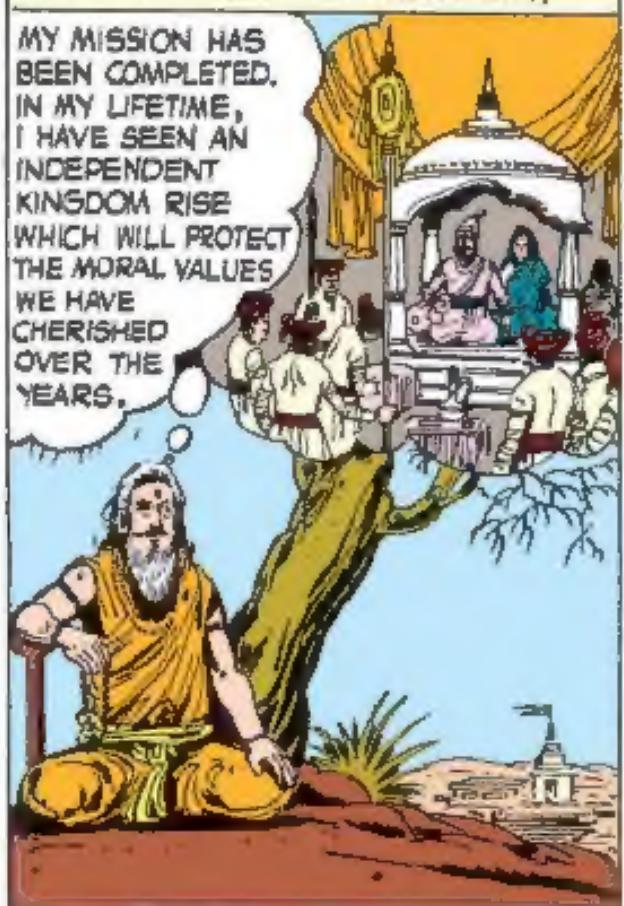
HIS GURU RAMDAS' BLESSINGS AFTER EACH VICTORY INSPIRED HIM ON TO THE NEXT.

YOU HAVE BEEN JUST AND RIGHTEOUS; MANY HAVE TAKEN FRIGHT, MANY HAVE SOUGHT YOUR PROTECTION. GREETINGS TO YOU, O BENEVOLENT KING...



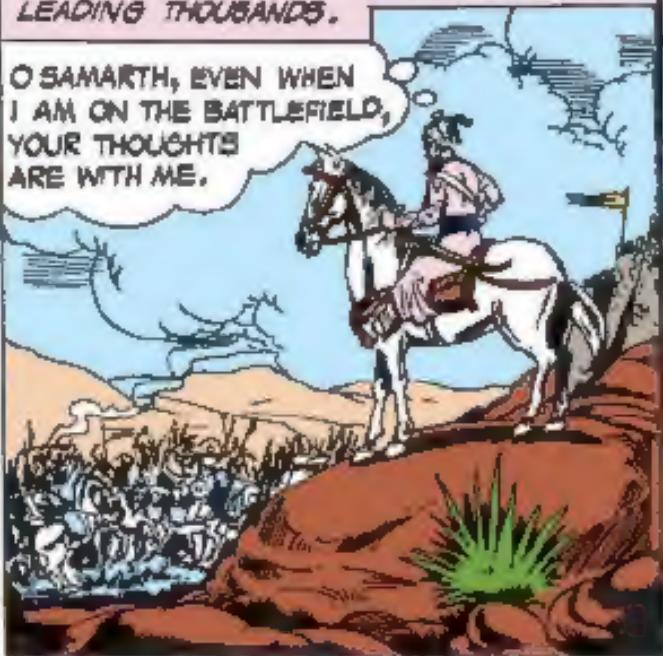
AT LAST, SHIVAJI WAS CROWNED CHHATRAPATI OF A LARGE PART OF MAHAL WHICH HE HAD LIBERATED. THE CORONATION TOOK PLACE AT RAIGADH, BUT RAMDAS COULD NOT ATTEND THE CEREMONY.

MY MISSION HAS BEEN COMPLETED. IN MY LIFETIME, I HAVE SEEN AN INDEPENDENT KINGDOM RISE WHICH WILL PROTECT THE MORAL VALUES WE HAVE CHERISHED OVER THE YEARS.



FROM A SMALL-TIME REBEL WITH A HANDFUL OF MEN SCATTERED OVER BARREN VALLEYS, SHIVAJI WAS NOW A MIGHTY GENERAL, LEADING THOUSANDS.

O SAMARTH, EVEN WHEN I AM ON THE BATTLEFIELD, YOUR THOUGHTS ARE WITH ME.



LATER WHEN RAMDAS CONVENED A CONFERENCE OF SAINTS AND SAGES AT A FORT NEAR SATARA, SHIVAJI WAS ABLE TO PAY HIM A DELAYED TRIBUTE.

HAIL TO THEE,
MY MASTER. I AM YOUR
HUMBLE SERVANT—
PROTECT MY HONOUR.
YOU ARE THE
CHHATRAPATI.



THE PLACE CAME TO BE KNOWN AS SALUANGAD AND IT WAS THERE THAT RAMDAS PASSED AWAY. THE TEMPLE, CONSTRUCTED OVER HIS MORTAL REMAINS, STANDS AT SALUANGAD TO THIS DAY.